

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

May 20, 2008
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Yantis, Commissioners Beighle, Hoople, Huenefeld-Gese, Lazetti, Seltzer, Stout,

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Emily Leslie, Alex O'Reilly, Joseph Adriano, Senait Taddese, Helena Stephens, Department of Parks and Community Services

GUEST SPEAKERS: Amnon Shoenfeld, King County Mental Health, Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services Division; Doug Whalen, United Way

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by Chair Yantis who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. April 15, 2008

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

4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

5. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Hoople reported that four Commissioners attended the Bel-Red joint board and commission meeting on May 15, which followed the open house with displays for a variety of Bellevue projects.

Commissioner Stout noted that during the joint meeting the department directors overseeing the Bel-Red project gave presentations. Comprehensive Planning Manager Paul Inghram then gave a detailed presentation outlining the draft proposal. However, the issue of affordable housing was not really on the screen other than a few comments about the incentive system. There was no acknowledgement of the concern of the Commission regarding affordable housing at the 40 to 80 percent level.

Chair Yantis pointed out that the report written to the Council gave a lot of weight to the issue of affordable housing. Human Services Manager Emily Leslie explained that the focus of the joint meeting was to review the issues with a broad brush; no attempt was made to get into the details, and there was little interaction on the part of those who attended. There was, however, a recent article in the *Bellevue Reporter* about the need for affordable housing in the Bel-Red corridor. The Council's column in the next edition of *It's Your City* will be written by Councilmember Noble and will focus entirely on affordable housing.

Ms. Leslie said the next big Bel-Red event is the public hearing before the Planning Commission on May 28. She added that the City Council has decided to hold a public hearing of its own, though a date has not been selected.

Commissioner Hoople said he attended the Veterans Levy Oversight Board meeting on May 15. At the meeting the group approved its annual report to the King County Council. The Human Services Oversight Board is set to approve their report on May 21.

Commissioner Beighle said she attended the YES breakfast fundraiser at which they brought in some \$300,000.

Commissioner Lazetti reported that there will be an open house at Vision House in Renton on May 21. The transitional housing units will be for homeless women and their children.

6. DISCUSSION

A. Update on Mental Illness Drug Dependency (MIDD) Sales Tax

Ms. Leslie reported that Councilmember Noble will be representing Bellevue on the oversight group for the MIDD sales tax. She noted that earlier in the day King County Mental Health sent out the draft strategies for public comment. She provided the Commissioners with copies of a handout made available during a presentation to the King County Alliance for Human Services regarding the oversight process and timelines.

King County Mental Health, Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services Division Director Amnon Shoenfeld said when the plan was submitted in the summer of 2007,

which was adopted by the King County Council in the fall of 2007, the 29 implementation strategies were one-pagers; the document is now some 150 pages long as many of the strategies have been further developed. The process has involved stakeholders, and specific workgroups focused on the basic strategy areas.

One of the strategy areas is community-based services, which is the community infrastructure for providing mental health and chemical dependency services to the community. Another area is youth services, which is primarily focused on prevention. A third strategy area is diversion services, and a fourth is domestic violence and sexual assault services the Council asked to have included in the plan when the budget was approved in the fall of 2007. A fifth strategy area is housing.

The plan is now out for public comment. He said the division will not be considering new services in the immediate future. The focus is on getting the plans and 35 strategies implemented. The comments received from the community will be used to tweak the strategies as needed, then an implementation plan will be submitted to the King County Council the first week of July along with a revised spending plan and an implementation schedule. Some of the services can be implemented the day the Council gives the authority to spend the money; that authority will not be forthcoming until the strategy plan is done and the evaluation plan is done.

Currently, persons without Medicaid insurance just about cannot access public mental health services. Out of the 27,000 persons served with outpatient services annually, less than 500 do not have Medicaid. The new funding will allow for treating more than four times the number of non-Medicaid patients. The picture will be similar for the chemical dependency system.

Other strategies will take much longer to bring online. A crisis or jail diversion facility will be constructed, but it will take at least six to nine months just to plan the facility, find a place to put it, and hire the staff.

Mr. Shoenfeld said when the plan was originally put out it had a budget of \$48 million. The tax collection process did not start until April 1, so the total revenues for 2008 will be closer to \$32 million. The fact that some of the strategies will take longer to become operational will affect the budget; some programs will spend very little money up front even though the revenues are coming in. That is where the idea of new services, specifically housing, comes in. The projection is that for 2008 only \$12 million will be spent on services, and the proposal is to spend the balance on housing. Legislation specifically allowing the funds to be spent on housing passed both the Senate and the House without a single dissenting vote. By allocating the unspent portion of the funds for housing, some projects will be able to get under way a full two years ahead of schedule.

At the MIDD Oversight Committee meeting a week ago there was quite a discussion about housing. There are those on the committee who are strong advocates for housing, and others who are strong advocates for human services. The latter group

fears that down the road the allocations for services will be channeled into housing instead. The intent, however, is simply to use the funds that will not be spent in the first year on housing. If the economy improves, more revenues will be generated through the sales tax; some projections indicate the take within three or four years will be \$60 million annually, which is \$10 million more than has been programmed to spend on services. It makes sense to keep open the option of using excess funds for housing.

Mr. Shoenfeld said the other big issue raised by the MIDD Oversight Committee was the projected or possible cuts in human services due to the King County budget crisis. The County has a projected budget deficit of \$20 million for 2009, and in future years the shortfall only gets worse. Every department of King County government has been asked to carefully review their budgets and propose some cuts. The questions raised by human service providers and the courts have been focused on how to accurately plan if there will be new money in one area but cuts in another.

Everyone is aware of the opportunity the sales tax fund affords to make a major difference in the lives of people with mental illness and chemical dependency. Mr. Shoenfeld said he intends to do everything he can not to squander the opportunity. That may mean reforming the way things are done and keeping people with mental illness and chemical dependency issues out of the jails. Cutting services that would prevent that outcome would not be in the best interests of the division.

Commissioner Stout asked if the funding can be used to sustain the strategies in the plan once they are implemented. Mr. Shoenfeld said programs implemented under the plan will remain the responsibility of the plan and not the County. The sales tax authority runs for nine years; at that point the tax will end unless the King County Council takes action. If the tax were to not be renewed, the programs funded by the revenues would go away.

Commissioner Lazetti asked if service providers will still have autonomy in how they run their programs, or if there will be additional policies, rules and regulations to be followed in order to get the tax revenues. Mr. Shoenfeld said there will be contracts with the agencies that will specify what must be done. The division expects to have some say over who agencies are allowed to enroll, and the target will be those who are most at risk.

Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese asked what methods will be used to get people connected to the services they need. Mr. Shoenfeld said the crisis outreach capability will be increased in a number of different areas. A million dollars will be added to the children's crisis response system. A new program to increase the ability to reach out to senior citizens who may be in crisis will be added. In addition, there will be a lot of referrals from the jails and the hospitals and emergency rooms.

Commissioner Lazetti asked if the vision for the crisis diversion centers includes mandating clients go through mental health services and chemical dependency counseling. Mr. Shoenfeld said there are a lot of different models for how the crisis diversion facility will be done. In some instances there could be brief involuntary commitments, but in other cases it will be totally voluntary. In Washington state there are four crisis diversion facilities in operation, and three of them are voluntary only. The preference is for the voluntary approach. Giving someone something that will give them hope is better than forcing them into treatment.

Ms. Leslie informed the Commissioners that Bellevue has been asked to participate in planning for the crisis diversion center. The police chief has been asked to be involved.

Commissioner Stout asked if the housing to be brought about with the tax revenues will be transitional in nature or permanent. Mr. Shoenfeld said that for the most part it will be permanent supported housing. That does not mean someone will live in a single building for the rest of their lives, but it does mean they will not be kicked out after a certain period of time. Some transitional housing is needed as well, particularly for the crisis diversion facility. Two or three days in a diversion facility is simply not enough to conduct a full assessment of the kind of housing a client needs.

Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese asked if there will be transitional housing for victims of domestic violence. Mr. Shoenfeld allowed that there will not be, unless there is an overlap with a mental illness. Domestic violence was not included in the original plan; the King County Council asked to have it added. Staff has been working with providers over the last few months to determine just what approach the division should take. Both strategies for domestic violence are focused primarily on prevention.

Ms. Leslie said the City Council agreed that a Councilmember should serve on the oversight group, and that is when Councilmember Noble was appointed to that task. The Council also asked for an interest statement on the issue and staff are in the process of working on a draft to be discussed at the May 27th City Council meeting as part of their regional issues agenda.

7. DISCUSSION

A. Wrap-Around Services Project

Family, Youth and Teen Services Manager Helena Stephens reminded the Commission that the Wrap-Around Services Project has a leadership team consisting of members of the City Council and the Bellevue School District Board. Chair Yantis serves on the team as well but wears his United Way hat. She said the management team meets regularly with Judy Buckmaster, principal at Lake Hills Elementary School, Patricia Knight with the Department of Planning and Community Development, and with Jeannie Anderson, Wrap-Around Services Manager.

Ms. Stephens said the pilot project is coming to the close of its third and final year. The initial project partners were the Bellevue School Board and School District, United Way of East King County, and the City of Bellevue. Along the way several businesses, non-profits, organizations, recreation programs, mental health services, and various city departments have come to the table to assist in the holistic approach to providing services to children and families, particularly those at the Lake Hills Elementary School site.

The program was designed to be a coordinated service model working with community members, human service providers, schools and city staff. The community component included people from the faith communities, businesses, cultural and ethnic groups, human services providers, and individuals. All of them came together to encompass the school and its population in a way that lifted up the families in need. Eleven outcomes were established for the model. The focus has been on helping students reach their academic achievements even before they came to school. The issues associated with surviving and thriving in a school setting are often tied to issues in the home.

The pilot project never was about seeking for new dollars. Rather, the focus was on resources existing in the community and how they could be better coordinated and therefore used more efficiently.

Doug Whalen, Community Impact Manager for United Way, said the management team began focusing on the final evaluation report in mid-2006, about halfway into the three-year pilot. The report took more than a year to complete. What started out as a \$7,000 project evolved into a \$15,000 project. Annie Laurie Armstrong, principal with Business School Community Connections, conducted the social program evaluation.

Mr. Whalen said the eleven outcomes were grouped in three different distinct categories: kids, families and communities. The evaluation focused on gathering and analyzing data relevant to each of the outcomes.

The evaluation report indicates that kids entering kindergarten at Lake Hills are better prepared. One measure of that is the letter, word and print task scores that have emerged over the three-year timeframe. The WASL scores for school-aged kids have also improved at the school, particularly in reading. There have been high rates of participation in afterschool programs. The afterschool programs are operating at capacity; one of the most comprehensive of the afterschool programs is the YMCA Kids University program that offers academic, recreation and arts programming.

Noting from the materials that 48 percent of the kids are involved in afterschool program, Commissioner Hoople commented that since the afterschool programs are operating at capacity it would not be possible to get the other 52 percent of the kids involved. Ms. Stephens agreed that is the case. She said the way the contract for

Kids University is set up the program can take up to 60 free and reduced lunch children, and the program maximum is 72 children. The site itself, however, has the capacity to serve the entire school population, but every twelfth child requires an additional trained staff member from the YMCA. Everyone would love to be able to increase the attendance, but it will take dollars to do so.

Mr. Whalen said much of the data about progress toward family outcomes originated from surveys with 66 families and 25 teachers. The input from those sources shows that there has been a good deal of progress made in terms of families connecting to Lake Hills, identifying with Lake Hills, and becoming involved at Lake Hills. Attendance at school-related events, particularly Career Fair Night, is remarkable; in the 2005-2006 school year there were about 350 who attended, but in 2006-2007 school year there were 550 attendees, and the most recent event had almost 700. The level of energy, involvement and engagement on the part of the kids was fabulous. That is a measure of the extent to which families view the school as a resource and a fun place to be.

The data about community outcomes reveals increased involvement between people and the school house both during the school day and outside of school hours. Neighbors in the community report seeing the school as a significant resource and a positive presence in the neighborhood. The school facilities are widely accessed by diverse organizations. The Lake Hills Neighborhood Association's annual blueberry festival has developed and has been implemented in a collaborative way between the neighborhood association, wrap-around services, and the school. Attendance is a function of those parties working together effectively.

Commissioner Beighle asked what the population of Lake Hills Elementary is. Ms. Stephens said when the Wrap-Around Program started the population was just over 300. It is currently at 456 and has a waiting list. Word spread rather quickly to other schools, parents and organizations that with the advent of the Wrap-Around Program Lake Hills is a school that provides a holistic approach to children. The school is no longer seen as a transitional school, so parents are keeping their children there. The fact that the program helps children be prepared and ready for school has drawn some. The school is currently operating at full capacity.

Commissioner Hoople asked if the school is charging normal rental fees to the groups using the facilities. Ms. Stephens said it depends. Organizations that come in as an independent source without an established partnership are paying the full rate. Organizations that do have a partnership with the Wrap-Around Program are being charged only a nominal fee.

Mr. Whalen said during the 2006-2007 school year there were eleven different groups active in before and after school programs. He said United Way is enthused about what the project means and what has accomplished. The project has served as a tremendous vehicle for facilitating school readiness and school achievement.

Ms. Stephens said everyone is both pleased and honored that the Wrap-Around Project has a very high reputation in Bellevue and in King County. SOAR has taken a serious look at the model with an eye on how to implement it in other school districts in the County. The project director, Erin Boone, has taken a few years off to build her family and Jeannie Anderson has been brought in to take her place. Ms. Anderson has been a recreation coordinator in Bellevue and King County for nearly 15 years, most recently at Crossroads Community Center. Judy Buckmaster will be leaving her post as principal of Lake Hills Elementary and going to Tyee Middle School. The new principal at Lake Hills will be Jonnie Gregory, the current principal at Clyde Hill Elementary; Ms. Gregory is already on board with the Wrap-Around Project and will be brought up to speed by Ms. Buckmaster.

Ms. Stephens said the intention is to expand the afterschool programs in 2008-2009. The leadership team will meet next on May 28 and at that meeting they will consider moving from project to program at the Lake Hills site. The first goal will be to make sure the program remains vibrant and active for the community. The current contract for recreation services will end in June, so a new RFP will soon be sent out. The RFP process allows an avenue for making sure the agencies providing services are in alignment with the Wrap-Around Program.

Simultaneous with taking the project to program status, the intent is to expand wrap-around services to one or two additional sites in Bellevue. Families whose children have moved on from Lake Hills Elementary to a middle school find that they are missing the services they enjoyed as part of the Wrap-Around Project. The expansion needs to be to other elementary school sites, but the expansion also needs to be to middle schools where previous Lake Hills students can continue to be tracked and receive the services they need.

Chair Yantis suggested that the cost of expanding to other elementary schools and middle schools might be scary. Ms. Stephens allowed that it is. She said what is needed is a sustainability plan. The city's approach has been to look at the resources already in place in the school building and then to initiate discussions with the school district and United Way about how to shift resources to focus more on the wrap-around services model. It is not inexpensive to do the program. At a minimum, there must be a wrap-around services coordinator on site, whether full time or half time; the model will not get implemented if a teacher is asked to take on the responsibility.

Commissioner Seltzer observed that Lake Hills is unique in that it is close to the library, to Jubilee Reach Center and to the Crossroads Community Center. She asked how many other schools in the Bellevue School District are similarly situated. Ms. Stephens explained that the Wrap-Around Program will only be initiated in a school after there have been discussions with the school community, the teachers, counselors and principal along with local business persons, community leaders, and the neighbors. The program at each school will need to be tailored to meet the needs of their student body, which means each program will not look identical to the Lake

Hills program. Lake Hills does benefit from being close to Jubilee Reach, but Jubilee Reach is in fact seeking to replicate itself through other faith organizations in other parts of the city.

Ms. Stephens said the must-haves include a coordinator, a school counselor, a principal who is onboard, and a family liaison.

The current focus is on identifying financial gaps that will need to be overcome in order to implement expansion of the program. There have been conversations with each of the primary partners. Serious effort is being put into finding and obtaining grants. The program results are tremendous, but everyone knows the program is not inexpensive to operate. Lake Hills has become a more attractive neighborhood for developers. DASH recently decided to make a significant contribution to wrap-around for the purpose of helping families get relocated. The small connections are coming together and are being knitted into an umbrella that will protect the families in the neighborhood, which was the original intent of wrap-around.

Commissioner Stout pointed out that the city and the school district were at almost exactly the same point twelve years ago with Phantom Lake. What the Wrap-Around Project has accomplished is phenomenal. However, a new superintendent came in, as did a new city manager for the city, and in a period of 15 months they managed to kill all of the work that had previously been done. Now the school district is bringing in yet another new superintendent.

Mr. Whalen suggested that since a new superintendent has not yet been chosen, there is still opportunity for a group such as the Human Services Commission to provide input to the district to ensure the kind of leadership necessary to sustain the wrap-around program. If the process is close to culminating, there still is an opportunity for the Commission to provide advice and input to the new superintendent. Commissioner Stout said the school board needs to hear from the community that the kind of involvement between the families and the schools needs to be something they look for in the superintendent they are getting ready to hire.

Ms. Stephens said she will carry that message to the leadership team. She noted that the school district and the board has been absolutely supportive of the wrap-around program.

Mr. Whalen agreed with the point made by Commissioner Stout. The essential ingredient to implementing and sustaining a Wrap-Around Project is culture and leadership more than it is money. An orientation toward working, collaborating and engaging with the local community does not come as standard equipment with superintendants. Some of them have that insight, but many do not.

Commissioner Lazetti asked why the Lake Hills school was chosen in the first place as the site for the pilot project. Ms. Stephens said when the project was initially conceived in 2004 there were a couple of elements of Lake Hills that were important.

First, the school was being rebuilt and many thought a new facility should have new programs. Second, the city at that time was giving quite a bit of support to the Lake Hills neighborhood. Third, the school population was very diverse and the school principal had already begun to implement some of the elements of the program.

Commissioner Lazetti asked who is watching out for “scope creep” to make sure the program does not extend beyond its necessary boundaries. Ms. Stephens explained that the management team meets regularly to maintain the program parameters and to evaluate the program. The team understands that if the program gets too large it will not be able to be effective. When wrap-around goes into a new school, part of the task involves training the principal, assistant principal and school counselor about not overloading the plate.

Chair Yantis asked if there is evidence that the program is important to the school board. Ms. Stephens said the school board is very supportive of the program. Chris Marks has been very supportive and has championed the program.

7. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Leslie reported that the Alliance of Eastside Agencies awards luncheon will be held on June 10. She said the department will pay the way of any Commissioner wanting to attend.

8. NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Beighle asked if the Commission will be responding to the letter from Gregory Zlotnik. Ms. Leslie said staff has made a formal response to his letter and also forwarded his suggestion to Neighborhood Outreach and others.

Commissioner Beighle said she found it interesting in reading the letter from Eileen Rasnack from Volunteer Chore Services that funding for older adults is not increasing. Ms. Leslie said that is a true statement. Alex O’Reilly said federal dollars under the Older Americans Act are not being increased, and there may be some cuts to Medicare reimbursements. United Way has so far not added any increases to the Older Adults Impact Council.

Ms. Leslie said staff earlier in the day received a disturbing email from Child Care Resources regarding program changes at Hopelink. The word is the agency will be closing both of their childcare programs in Bellevue in September. She said staff will be seeking additional information directly from Hopelink. The level of staff turnover the agency has seen recently, combined with news of a major program change, is a red flag.

9. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Yantis adjourned the meeting at 8:37 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date