

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

June 22, 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: Emily Leslie, Alex O'Reilly, Joseph Adriano, Terry Smith, Megan Farwell, Department of Parks and Community Services

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 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 6:09 p.m., and Commissioner Beighle, who arrived at 6:47 p.m.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. June 8, 2010

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

4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

5. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Human Services Manager Emily Leslie said she is a member of the United Way New Solutions Committee, which she noted had met earlier in the day. The topic of discussion was the United Way funding process and priorities. The organization's board recently adopted a new strategic plan that will have some implications for

Bellevue in that they will continue to narrow their funding to particular priority areas and away from general operating support for programs.

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly provided the Commissioners with copies of a press release regarding the King County Mobility Coalition; she said she currently serves as co-chair of the organization and represents the Eastside. The press release was in regard to the award of an Easter Seals planning grant that will be used to establish goals and a work plan.

Ms. O'Reilly also provided the Commissioners with copies of an email from Gwen Rousseau, the city's demographer, in which it was noted that there is no forecast for unemployment specific to Bellevue. However, relying on King County data, it appears the unemployment rate has fallen somewhat and is expected to decline from 7.9 percent in 2010, to 7.5 percent in 2011, and to 7.1 percent in 2012.

Assistant Director Terry Smith took a moment to thank the Commissioners for their valiant work in evaluating all of the proposals. He said it is all too easy to forget the amount of time and energy that goes into the process of supporting the needs of those who are served in Bellevue.

Mr. Smith said the city recently submitted a proposal to the Seattle/King County Health Department for an allocation of the federal dollars used to support the reduction of obesity and tobacco use. He said if funded, the proposal will provide for the development of an active Bellevue Master Plan for moving forward with an obesity reduction program for children and families.

6. DISCUSSION

A. Set Funding Recommendations on CDBG Applications & Develop a Contingency Plan

Ms. Leslie pointed out the approximate \$47,000 shortfall between the amount available and the requested amount. She noted, however, that three of the six applications were generated by staff. Accordingly, staff sat down earlier in the day to postulate a starting point for making reductions aimed at bringing things into balance.

With regard to ARCH, Ms. Leslie explained that the budget proposal submitted within the internal City budget process for funding projected CDBG funding in the amount of \$80,000, which was not far from the amount awarded in 2010. For discussion purposes, the staff recommended keeping the funding flat. The city provides \$200,000 to ARCH through the Housing Trust Fund, and ARCH also receives income from loan repayments and interest income, bringing their income from Bellevue up to about \$461,000.

Ms. Leslie recommended pulling out some line items from both the CDBG Administration and Planning applications, reducing the requested amount for the

Administration application by \$2,400, and reducing the requested amount for the Planning application by \$6,000. Some of the planning dollars are used to make contributions to regional collaborations, including Communities Count, FACES East, and the Alliance of Eastside Agencies. Under the staff proposal, only the Alliance of Eastside Agencies would receive funding.

The CDBG Planning and Administration applications are both used in part to reimburse the city for a portion of the direct staff costs related to managing the federal grant.

Ms. Leslie said the recommendation of staff was to hold both the Minor Home Repair Program and Hopelink Employment Program applications flat. With those adjustments made, the balance was still off by \$23,000, so staff recommended taking it from the Home Repair Program.

After brief discussion, there was agreement among the Commissioners to adopt the recommendation of staff.

With regard to developing a contingency plan, Ms. Leslie proposed basing it on increase or decrease percentages rather than actual dollar amounts, with equal percentages applied to all projects. She suggested that if a reduction is necessary, reductions should be made to the applications equally. However, if the funding received is more than expected, the additional funds should be allocated by equal percentage to each of the programs except for Planning and Administration.

Commissioner Yantis suggested that in the event a reduction is necessary, Planning, Administration and the Hopelink program should be held harmless and the funds taken from the other applications. The same approach could be taken if there are additional funds, except that more might be added to the Planning and Administration applications.

Chair Huenefeld Gese commented that under that scenario the cuts to ARCH and the Major and Minor Home Repair Programs could be significant. Commissioner Stout pointed out that the Minor Home Repair Program budget was already relatively small.

Mr. Adriano suggested ten percent would be a good figure to work with for the contingency plan.

There was preliminary agreement that in the event of a reduction of up to ten percent in the CDBG allocation to the city, there should be an equal reduction in the allocations to the ARCH, Major Home Repair and Minor Home Repair applications, and in the event of up to a ten percent increase in the CDBG allocation to restore full funding to all six applications, beginning with Planning and Administration and followed in order by the Minor Home Repair Program, the Major Home Repair Program, and ARCH.

7. DISCUSSION

A. General Fund Recommendations

Ms. Leslie highlighted all of the applications flagged by the Commission for funding beyond a cost of living adjustment, and all previously not funded applications that had been flagged for possible funding.

Graduate Student Intern Megan Farwell shared with the Commissioners a spreadsheet on which a point value had been assigned to each of the high, medium and low rankings. She noted that a high ranking received three points, a medium ranking two points, and a low ranking one point. She observed that the range of points any one proposal could get was between seven and twenty-one. Overall, applications receiving between one and seven points were given a low ranking, applications receiving between eight and thirteen points were ranked medium, and applications receiving between fourteen and twenty-one points were ranked high.

Ms. Leslie noted that following the Commission's initial review of the applications there was \$59,749 unallocated. She said that was the amount of money available to play with within the Scenario 1 budget.

Commissioner Yantis observed that to fully fund all of the applications ranked high would require about \$160,000, more than the amount available to allocate. He proposed reviewing first the applications ranked low and medium to see if any of them are programs that address basic needs, direct assistance, and employment-related issues.

Commissioner Bruels pointed out that both the Renewal Food Bank and the World Impact Network applications are for programs that provide a basic need, which is food. However, both agencies are quite large with wide funding bases, and their requests to Bellevue are comparatively small percentages of their overall budgets. Choosing not to fund either application will not result in those programs going away.

Commissioner Plaskon said he ranked the HealthPoint Dental Program high because of the great need and the fact that the service is not being duplicated anywhere else in the county. Dental services are critical for keeping people employed. He allowed that he ranked the HealthPoint Medical Program low because it has a very large overall budget. While the program addresses a critical need, the same services can and are being provided by emergency rooms.

Commissioner Bruels argued that clients are often turned away from emergency rooms if they present with non-medical emergencies. Better and more efficient care is provided by medical clinics.

Commissioner Stout highlighted the Andrew's Glen application and voiced concern that the facility may get built while leaving the agency no way to operate it to accommodate veterans as planned.

Ms. Farwell pointed out that two of the applications that ranked high did not have any funding attached to them. If both were to be funded, all of the available dollars would be used up.

Commissioner Stout suggested the Sophia's Place and Sophia's Home housing applications, along with the St. Andrew's Glen application, would be good programs for which to seek additional funding from the Council. She said the three applications should at least be given sufficient funding to give them a kick start.

Chair Huenefeld Gese argued in favor of providing some funding for the SeaMar application. She said the truth is that the city does not support the Latino population enough. The agency is well-established and solid even though it is new to Bellevue.

Commissioner Hoople noted that the overall budget for the agency is quite large, and the request from Bellevue a relatively small percentage of it. Commissioner Stout agreed but said providing them with some funding would signal appreciation for the work the agency is being done in the community, and would provide Bellevue dollars that could then be leveraged to provide even more services.

Commissioner Yantis argued against funding the SeaMar application. He allowed that the program is very good and the agency is solid, but with only limited dollars available making essentially token gestures is not warranted. Commissioner Plaskon concurred. He also agreed that the program is a good one, but it is the wrong year to spend money just to send a signal.

Chair Huenefeld Gese said SeaMar is a staple in the Latino community, both in Seattle and South Seattle. Funding the application would help the city break the stereotype that it is not embracing and connecting with the Latino community. She agreed that a Bellevue contribution would help the agency leverage funding and show the community that Bellevue is a player.

Commissioner Bruels commented that healthcare services are certainly needed. He agreed it would be good to see the application funded and proposed raising the application from medium to high.

Commissioner Hoople argued in favor of leaving the application tagged as a medium priority.

Commissioner Yantis concurred with Commissioner Bruels' argument in favor of taking the HealthPoint Medical Program application out of the list of applications ranked high. He said he would fund the application at \$70,000. There was general agreement in favor of taking that approach.

Commissioner Yantis asked if there are other programs like Andrew's Glen that were ranked low or medium that fall into the category of being good candidates for funding in order to make sure services are in operation after the facility is built.

Commissioner Stout called attention to the Bellevue School District Early Learning and After-School Program as a medium-ranked employment-related program that fits the category; she suggested funding it at less than the requested amount.

Commissioner Yantis said he would be willing to move the application into the high ranked category.

Commissioner Plakson observed that several applications are for programs that provide child care, and all of them are important. Some were ranked high and other medium. Commissioner Stout pointed out that the YMCA application includes two new childcare programs that have not previously been funded by the city.

Commissioner Yantis said that application is one he would support moving up to high.

There was agreement to move the Bellevue School District Early Learning and After-School Program and the YMCA eastside child care programs to the high category.

Commissioner Yantis asked for comment with regard to why the World Impact Network application ended up being ranked medium rather than high. Commissioner Stout said there were concerns about data gathering. Commissioner Hoople said the Commission chose not to fund the program the first time it applied because it did not collect any demographic data. However, in the last funding cycle the program was funded because the agency had begun collecting some data.

Mr. Adriano said the issues of data collection and allowing one person with a driver's license to represent an entire household were highlighted as concerns by the Commission. He pointed out, however, that other agencies the Commission has chosen to fund take the same approach.

Commissioner Stout proposed that the threefold increase in the requested amount may have been part of what turned the Commission off from funding the application. Commissioner Bruels observed from the application that the program has seen a 30 percent increase in requests for food to date in 2010, faced increased costs because of a city required investment in technical assistance to capture relative information, and had to shoulder the loss of a rent subsidy from the church in which the program is housed.

Commissioner Yantis suggested that moving the application to the high category would not be tantamount to fully funding the request.

There was agreement to raise the World Impact Network application to the high category.

Councilmember Chelminiak urged the Commission to focus on developing a solid proposal to forward to the Council regarding how to allocate the Scenario 1 dollars. Any request for additional funding that is developed should be based on providing for basic needs, housing, and employment. Funding increases to specific programs can be labeled as one time only, but it will be difficult not to continue with the same level of funding in the future.

Chair Huenefeld Gese concurred and said once the Commission has determined which programs should be included in the high category, it will be easier to focus on allocating the remaining \$59,000-plus from the Scenario 1 budget. Then, the focus can be turned to the balance of the highly ranked applications as the basis for an ask to put before the Council.

Commissioner Stout commented that one-time funding is often earmarked for programs that experience a sudden increase in need. With the funding they need additional staff to handle the load, and then once the one-time funding plug is pulled, the agency is faced with laying people off and clients not receiving services. Many agencies are facing the loss of large grants that have been maintaining important programs. One-time funds can plug a hole, but the bottom line for most agencies is maintaining their infrastructure, staff and services. Too many false expectations can be generated through the use of one-time funds.

Commissioner Plakson called attention to the King County Bar Foundation application and suggested it does not fit the basic needs category. He also pointed out that similar services are offered on the Eastside. He argued against funding the program.

Chair Huenefeld Gese suggested the program services clients who are facing the loss of their jobs or homes and as such is a critical service. She added that the program is very cost effective.

Commissioner Bruels observed that the King County Bar Foundation offers a number of different services, including housing justice, family law and disability benefits. He allowed that while their services are redundant to the services offered by the Eastside Legal Assistance Program, the fact is the need is greater than what one agency is able to provide.

The Commissioners were split on whether or not to move the application to the high category. It was flagged for additional discussion.

Commissioner Yantis called attention to Project Learn and commented that the after-school program is similar to the one offered by the Bellevue School District, which previously was moved to the high category. Commissioner Stout argued that Project Learn is a very good program but is not as comprehensive. She suggested that the early childhood and elementary age child care is more important as a safety factor.

Commissioner Stout said if there were plenty of money available she would vote to fund the AtWork! School-to-Work Partnership. The program certain is worthy, and the requested funding represents a relatively small percentage of the agency's overall budget. The work should actually be done by the school district, however.

Chair Huenefeld Gese suggested that by funding the Adult Day Health Program of Elder and Adult Day Services, the sandwich generation is aided in staying employed. The generation has elderly parents as well as children relying on them for care, and if they do not have a place for their parents to go during the day they may not be able to remain in the workforce. The Commissioners concurred and agreed to move the application to the high category.

Ms. Leslie recommended focusing first on allocating the remaining \$59,000-plus before identifying programs for inclusion in a package for which to seek a one-time ask from the Council. She further recommended that any new programs should be funded with the unallocated dollars.

Commissioner Stout pointed out that funding the Sophia's Home and Sophia's Place applications alone would exceed the available dollars from Scenario 1. They would, however, be good candidates for inclusion in the ask package. Commission Bruels argued that placing new programs into the ask package could put them at risk. Chair Huenefeld Gese concurred and suggested that if the Commission really wants to see the two programs funded, the available dollars should be used.

Commissioner Plakson asked if either of the two programs would go away if the Commission chose to fund them at half their requested amounts. One approach would be to fund them at the 50 percent level and then put the programs into the ask package with the argument that the other 50 percent is needed to keep the programs operating in the community. Chair Huenefeld Gese thought that proposal had merit.

Commissioner Stout held the view that by putting the two programs into the ask package, the Council would in effect be asked to indicate the degree to which they value single women. There is an enormous gap on the east side of the lake relative to shelter for single women that is not being met; shelter for single men is being funded by the city.

Commissioner Stout argued in favor of putting both programs along with Andrew's Glen in the one-time ask package. She said the argument should be that the programs represent unmet critical needs in the community and cannot be funded with the available money unless current services are cut back.

Councilmember Chelminiak said as a member of the Council his question back to the Commission would be why the decision was made to fund shelter for men but not for women. The Commission exists in part to make the tough choices, and if there is an emerging need for women's shelter, the Council will want to know why the decision was made not to fund the need within the existing budget. He allowed that the

Council may in fact buy the argument and choose to fund the programs in the ask package, but that cannot be guaranteed. Accordingly, the Commission should put together the very best recommendation it can using the Scenario 1 budget, and then go to bat seeking additional funds for other identified needs.

Commissioner Yantis said he would like to see the Sophia's Home Housing Program funded permanently, not just with one-time dollars. He said he did not have the same conviction with regard to the Sophia's Place program. Many of the programs the Commission cares the most about are already earmarked for a cost of living increase and as such they are not being harmed. He said he would like to see Eastside Baby Corner bumped up.

Commissioner Beighle suggested that if any agency could be successful in the fundraising arena it would be Eastside Baby Corner given the popularity of the program in the community.

Commissioner Yantis concurred and suggested that the major part of the remaining \$59,000-plus should be allocated to Sophia's Home.

Commissioner Stout commented that Sophia's Home is the last step up in a three-step process for the women. She allowed that Sophia's Place is the second step. Commissioner Yantis agreed but suggested the requested \$50,000 for Sophia's Place is just too big to bite off.

Chair Huenefeld Gese proposed giving \$25,000 to Sophia's Home and \$10,000 or \$15,000 for Sophia's Place.

The Commissioners reviewed the application for Sophia's Place and pointed out that with reduced funding the program would need to be closed on the weekends. Chair Huenefeld Gese said a lot of women stay in their cars over the weekend because they do not feel safe traveling to shelters in Seattle.

Commissioner Stout proposed reversing Chair Huenefeld Gese's suggestion, giving \$25,000 to Sophia's Place and \$10,000 to \$15,000 to Sophia's Home.

Commissioner Yantis proposed funding each application at half the requested amount, or \$19,000 for Sophia's Home and \$25,000 for Sophia's Place. There was agreement to take that approach.

Commissioner Yantis said that off the remaining applications in the high category his top choice would be the Bellevue School District Early Learning and After-School Program.

Commissioner Hoople said he could support allocating some funds to Andrew's Glen for case management. He allowed that the agency has successfully raised capital money in the past but not for case management, which is what will make the program

work once families are placed in the units. He added that the existing King County Veterans Program can provide case management for the 30 percent of the residents who are supposed to be veterans, so allocating the balance of the unallocated dollars would serve to provide case management for non-veterans housed in the units.

There was consensus to allocate the remaining funds to the Andrew's Glen application.

Attention was given next to developing a package of programs for which to seek additional funds.

Commissioner Yantis commented that one-time funding may not be the right term to use. Currently there are unmet needs because of the existing conditions. No one can say for sure what the needs will be in another two years; those needs will need to be specifically addressed then, even if they are exactly the same. There is no guarantee of continued funding for programs cycle by cycle anyway.

Ms. Leslie said there are some one-time funding options that are easier than others to pull back on in the next funding cycle. Within the Bellevue Cares proposal there is an element focused on emergency financial assistance to address utility expenses. Child care vouchers and allocations to food banks fit the same profile. Voucher dollars generally do not require agencies to hire additional staff.

Commissioner Bruels commented that people who have jobs presumably are able to purchase food to feed their families and are more likely to be able to pay their bills. People who do not have childcare are not going to be able to go to work in the first place.

Councilmember Chelminiak agreed with the notion of seeking funds to increase voucher programs. He said that approach will send direct services to individuals. Dollars allocated to programs, however needed they are, may in part be used to increase the salary of the staff who provide the services rather than increasing the actual services provided. The best argument in favor of additional funding will be a proposal that will result in direct services to those who need them.

Chair Huenefeld Gese concurred but pointed out that keeping an executive director in place by increasing their salary can lead directly to a program remaining vital and providing needed services. In any event, whatever the Commission adds to the ask package must be worth fighting for and must have solid arguments behind them.

Commissioner Stout pointed out that agencies with senior management that is well paid tend to be more stable, well managed, conduct effective fundraising, and deliver services effectively. In those instances, allocated dollars that are used to pay salaries pay good dividends.

Ms. Leslie made the suggestion to focus on developing the contingency plan based on an increase or reduction of ten percent. She said the contingency plan would be different from the package of programs for which to see additional one-time dollars to address emergency needs. Mr. Smith added that while the Commission is required to develop a contingency plan for how to deal with a reduction in funding, there is no requirement to address how an increase in funding should be dealt with.

There was consensus to move work on developing a contingency plan for a ten percent reduction in funding, and a one-time-only funding package.

Mr. Smith said the city took a look in 2009 at what the impact of the recession could be having on Bellevue residents. The collapse of some of the human services infrastructure was one of the main concerns. The study included looking at the resources needed by and available to Bellevue residents. The emergency care ideas came from the work. The study found an increase in the number of late payments to and shut-offs by the utility companies and the need for childcare so parents could keep their jobs or seek jobs. Assistance for Bellevue residents facing foreclosure was also highlighted as a big need. The proposal developed targeted those areas. The recommendation included paying for bringing mortgage counselors into the city to support keeping Bellevue families in their own homes. Childcare assistance took the form of scholarships to recreation programs, summer day camps, and traditional vouchers. Also in the recommendation was the Cultural Navigator Program as a way to help people get information about available resources. Funding for the project has been added to the current mix of budget proposals, but where it will fall out in the ranking is anyone's guess.

Chair Huenefeld Gese suggested one approach would be to submit to the Council a package for one-time funding comprised of the applications ranked as high by the Commissioners. Ms. Leslie advised against taking that approach. Where one-time funds are involved, it will be necessary to identify an approach that will not be detrimental over the long term to the functioning and operations of the agencies receiving the funds. The best use of one-time funds is direct assistance programs.

Commissioner Yantis pointed out that there were only six applications for programs offering direct assistance in the form of vouchers and the like to which the Commission could substantially add.

Councilmember Chelminiak commented that sometime toward the end of July or early in August it will be known what Budget One proposals are above and below the funding line. At that point the Council will probably reiterate its commitment to the human services allocation based on the established formula. That may be the time to seek support for a one-time allocation to address recession impacts.

Ms. Leslie urged the Commissioners to give more consideration to the ask package and be ready to continue the discussion at the next meeting. She said the issue of

developing a contingency plan addressing a ten percent reduction in funding would be tackled at the next meeting as well.

Commissioner Stout said it would be helpful to have a new spreadsheet printed out showing only the applications the Commission has preliminarily decided to fund.

Motion to accept the recommendation for the CDBG applications for 2011 was made by Commissioner Stout. Second was by Commissioner Hoople and the motion carried unanimously.

8. OLD BUSINESS

The Commission discussed altering the meeting schedule since several members cannot attend on July 27th. It was agreed to move the public hearing to July 20 and to keep the July 13 meeting scheduled in case it is needed.

9. NEW BUSINESS – None

10. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

11. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Huenefeld Gese adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Secretary of the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date