

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

July 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: Emily Leslie, Alex O'Reilly, Joseph Adriano, 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 6:31 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 6:33 p.m., and Commissioner Yantis, who arrived at 6:37 p.m.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. June 22, 2010

Commissioner Stout referred to the fourth to last paragraph on page 3 of the minutes and noted that "...should be held homeless..." should read "...should be held harmless..." She also called attention to the second line of the first paragraph on page 9 and noted that the word "certain" should be "certainly."

Motion to approve the minutes as amended 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 he attended the Veterans Levy Committee meeting on July 15 and noted that the quarterly meeting of the joint Veterans and Human Services Levy groups would be held on July 22.

Commissioner Hoople provided the Commissioners with copies of the new Annual report and noted that on page 12 the document contained a new section called the Levy Performance Management Report Summary.

Commissioner Bruels reported that he and Commissioner Beighle attended the open house for the King County District Mental Health Court in Issaquah. He said the mental health court system established by King County has been cited by many as a model program and touted as a great success.

Commissioner Bruels said the Mental Illness and Drug Dependency Oversight Committee meeting for July was canceled. However, the contract for the Crisis Diversion Center has been awarded to the Downtown Emergency Service Center. They will be the provider of the Crisis Diversion Facility and the Interim Respite Program attached to it. **That will benefit the city of Bellevue.**

Human Services Manager Emily Leslie said she and intern Megan Farwell attended the public hearing on the budget conducted by the City Council on July 19. She noted that 14 human service agencies sent representatives to testify. In lieu of the fact that the meeting ran late, some of the agencies decided to submit written testimony for the Commission's public hearing to avoid having to come to City Hall two nights in a row.

Grant Coordinator Joseph Adriano commented that staff have been conducting monitoring visits throughout the year. Between the first of July and early August at least six agencies will receive visits. Reports for each visit are being generated, and in the fall staff will provide the Commission with an update.

6. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Commission Hears from Citizens and Applicants in Response to Preliminary 2011-2012 Funding Recommendations

Motion to open the public hearing was made by Commissioner Hoople. Second was by Commissioner Stout and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Judy Jennison, president of the board for the Eastside Legal Assistance Program, introduced Tom McDade, ELAP board vice president, and Stan Kehl, ELAP executive director. She said the agency is pleased with the Commission's preliminary recommendation to fund the program with \$22,027 for the next budgeting cycle. She said program has been in existence for 20 years providing free legal

services to low-income residents of east King County. The services are provided through a core of volunteer attorneys whose work is provided pro bono. The services offered range from landlord/tenant disputes to insurance disputes, family law and bankruptcy. In 2009 ELAP provided services to 980 Bellevue residents. Based on the numbers to date for 2010, it is anticipated that the total number of Bellevue residents served will exceed the 2009 level. The demands are greater than they have ever been. She shared a success story with the Commission and noted that the positive outcome could not have been achieved without ELAP's mentoring and support.

Mr. Stan Kehl with ELAP said the quarterly reports showing the number of clients served are regularly submitted to staff. He said ELAP stands willing at any time to provide the Commission with more stories about those being served or information documenting how the allocated resources are being used. He said the agency appreciates the recommendation of the Commission and looks forward to continued support.

Ms. Mary Ellen Stone, King County Sexual Assault Resource Center, thanked the Commission for its continued support. She noted that support from the city gives the agency a steady foundation. The financial situation facing King County is troubling to all agencies and underscores the importance of the support provided by the city. KCSARC has already exceeded all of its 2010 goals. No one expects in their lifetime to be a witness in a criminal trial, yet that is exactly what victims of sexual assault are. It falls to KCSARC staff to help the victims through the process at no cost. She said in her 30 years in the field she has never seen clients as stressed as they are as they face both having been assaulted and the current financial climate. Many are afraid they will lose their jobs, and thus their healthcare coverage, if they seek therapy or have to take time off to work through the legal process. The increased stress on families is making it all the more difficult to recover. The number of felony child abuse cases is on the rise and the trend is being closely monitored. KCSARC is working closely with Consejo on programs for the Spanish-speaking community; a Consejo staff person is permanently assigned to the KCSARC office. KCSARC is also looking into how youth are particularly vulnerable to victimization online, especially middle school kids who are gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or questioning and who may be estranged from their families. A prevention program is being developed for them using grant dollars.

Ms. Bertie Conrad spoke representing Youth Eastside Services. She thanked the Commission for its generous recommendation to fund the programs YES has provided in the community for more than 40 years. The needs are great. As parents face economic- and job-related pressures, the stressors filter down to the kids. In 2009 the city's support of YES resulted in the provision of more than 10,000 hours of service to clients within the agency's three departments: substance abuse, general counseling, and outreach. The increase in domestic violence YES staff are seeing can be tied to the economic stresses families are feeling. More kids are turning to drugs, more kids are suicidal, and more kids are needing medication. Medicaid does

fund services for many of the kids, but there are others who do not qualify for Medicaid or do not have insurance. Funding from the city helps pay for services for those kids.

Ms. Erica Horn with HERO House said the agency has started its supportive employment contract with King County and is in the process of interviewing candidates to lead the position.

Ms. Joy Gerlicher, a member of HERO House, a clubhouse for adults recovering from mental illness, said the program literally saved her life. She said she was hospitalized at Fairfax Psychiatric Hospital in Kirkland for a few weeks, and they recommended that she participate in their partial program. Following that she was referred to HERO House where they have helped her improve her self confidence. She said she now teaches a life skills class twice a week to other members.

Mr. Stan Donald said he serves as a member of the HERO House board and is director of the PR committee. He said he drives in every day from Kirkland to HERO House because it is the only mental health recovery program that provides clients with satisfaction. He offered an invitation for the Commissioners to come visit HERO House anytime. He thanked the Commission for its past support and said he hoped the Commission would find a way to allocate to the program the amount of funding it has requested.

Ms. Barb Thompson, office director for NAMI Eastside, thanked the Commission for its past support. She commented that when the agency was able to first obtain funding from Bellevue, it was counted as a huge accomplishment. That is because where Bellevue goes, others go. Bellevue funding has opened the door to funding from other Eastside jurisdictions as well. She thanked the Commission for the proposed level of funding for 2011-2012. NAMI Eastside offers education in conjunction with Bellevue College; at the most recent forum, 140 people participated. Effective January 12, the forums will be conducted at Overlake Hospital. In March the children's program proved to be a big success; plans are being made to conduct the program again in 2011 with a two-day approach: one day for educators, and one day for family members. The agency now offers six support groups for family members, one of which is in Spanish. There are also now four consumer groups that meet a total of nine times each month. The agency has conducted more outreach in 2010 than it has in the last couple of years, the result of which has been an increase in understanding about the needs. A four-hour training session was provided to the Bellevue police department and the hostage negotiation teams from around the Eastside. Similar training has been given to just about every police department on the Eastside. The number of calls from people in need of emergency help has been increasing. The agency is steadily growing, but that growth could not take place without support from the city.

Ms. Olga Kazakova spoke on behalf of the Eastern European Counseling Center. She asked the Commission to consider providing funding to the agency. She said

when she got married she immigrated with her husband to the United States, but her husband failed to file any papers for her. That left her without any rights or ability to earn a living on her own. By chance she learned about the Eastern European Counseling Center which successfully helped her climb out of her depression, file the proper paper work, and eventually file for divorce to escape an abusive relationship. The Counseling Center provides an important work in serving immigrants who have nowhere else to go.

Ms. Julie McFarland, Homeless Youth Services Director for Friends of Youth, thanked the Commission for its ongoing support. She stated that the agency would not be able to provide the quality of services it provides without support from Bellevue. She said the agency submitted three applications for 2011-2012 funding: the Healthy Start program, which in 2009 helped 220 young parents with their first child; foster care parent recruitment, which in 2009 brought forward 61 new foster families, and which is conducted as a part of the transitional living program that serves young adults aged 18 to 24; and The Landing Emergency Shelter Program for young adults aged 18 through 24.

Erica said she has been attending The Landing on and off for the past year and a half. She said The Landing has provided her with a consistent place to do laundry, get a shower, and sleep at night. In the last couple of months The Landing has been very full; more young people are showing up than there is room for, which means many have to be turned away. When there are too many, kids are chosen by drawing names out of a container. The demand for additional services for homeless youth is very great on the Eastside. Support from the city is appreciated and is still needed.

Ms. Farlis Lewis with Senior Services of Seattle/King County thanked the Commission for its continued support. Funding from the city allows the agency to do what it does best, which is to serve its clients. The Minor Home Repair, Volunteer Transportation and Meals on Wheels programs are all on schedule to meet their goals for 2010. Outreach for the Minor Home Repair Program continues to be conducted.

Ms. Joellen Monson with Therapeutic Health Services thanked the Commission for its support over the years. The agency provides drug and alcohol as well as mental health outpatient services to the greater Eastside community. The agency continues to do a good job of leveraging its resources in order to expand its service offerings and partnerships. Most recently a partnership has been formed with Congregations for the Homeless and Sophia Way to serve the homeless population. The agency has for a long time had a relationship with Russian Counseling Services to provide drug and alcohol services; recently a mental health provider has been added to that partnership. THS has been identified by the University of Washington as a site learning center for MSW and BSW students. The work done by THS affects people's lives every day.

Ms. Helen Leuzzi, Executive Director of Sophia Way, said the program of homeless women would not be able to do what it does without many of the organizations supported by the city. She thanked the Commission for its decision to support the program for the first time. The program is operated out of the Bellevue First Congregational Church in downtown Bellevue. Recently 15 women were counted sleeping outside on the church grounds. Homelessness is an issue in Bellevue and it must be addressed through the provision of services and shelters. The average Sophia Way client is 50 years old. Many have mental illnesses, physical disabilities, are dealing with the aftermath of a divorce, are widows, or have lost their jobs. The proposed allocation to Sophia Way represents ten percent of the program's annual need. During the program's first 18 months, some 172 persons have been served, 48 of whom will have been placed in permanent housing by the end of the calendar year. The aim is to double the size of the shelter.

Mr. Jeremy Vargas, Clinic Manager of the SeaMar Community Health Center, said the private not for profit community-based organization is committed to providing quality and comprehensive health and human services to the local community, especially the Latino community. He said there are 22 registered patients at the facility but in 2009 some 5200 medical encounters were provided. That number is expected to rise by 15 to 20 percent in 2010.

Ms. Helena Salinas, a breast cancer survivor, said she has been going to the clinic in Bellevue for the past 14 months. She said she appreciates the services she has received, especially since the services were provided in her own language. She thanked the Commission for choosing to fund the SeaMar Community Health Center.

Ms. Agnetta Kabuage, business manager for Jubilee Reach Center, said the agency is extremely grateful for the proposed funding, and for funding the ESL program in the past. The program has some excellent volunteers who come on a daily basis. The agency also collaborates with other agencies to better serve the community.

Ms. Rachel Mathison, Director of Resident Services for St. Andrews Housing Group, said services at the properties in Bellevue were first offered in 2009. She said the city believed in the vision from the start and showed that by allocating funds, something for which the agency is very grateful. Support services are offered to residents who receive housing but need more. The Commissioners were also thanked for their recommendation to fund the Andrews Glen project. The construction project has gotten under way and will soon become 40 units, 20 units of which will be set aside for homeless veterans.

Mr. Richard Wilson with AtWork! thanked the Commission for its past funding and for recommending continued funding. He said the agency works with people who have significant disabilities and assists them in becoming employed. In the process, local businesses are supplied with good employees. In the matching process, everyone wins. The community liaison position, funded in part by the city, has continued to evolve; it has resulted in the cultivating of some very good relationships with the

business community. The Transitional Employment Consultant Service has also proved to be an excellent service. The city is to be praised for the way in which it supports people with disabilities.

Ms. Megan Altimore represented Hopelink. She thanked the Commission for its recommendation for continued funding for the programs offered by the agency. Bellevue is a leader in its support of human services. Times are tough. During the past year the agency distributed 3.5 million pounds of food, three million pounds of which was donated by the community, yet the total need is still not being met. Over \$650,000 has been given away for emergency financial assistance to keep people in their homes and away from homelessness. In addition, the agency has handed out \$3.4 million in energy assistance; those dollars came from both the federal government and Puget Sound Energy Cares. The agency is focused on helping people gain their own footing in light of the recession. To date 114 students have completed long-term financial literacy classes, and 127 students have completed computer education classes. With regard to the employment program, 67 percent of the participants have been placed in jobs or were able to improve their placements in terms of greater income or greater hours. Eighty percent of the shelter residents have been assisted in coming out of homelessness and moving to greater housing stability. Of great significance, however, is the fact that Hopelink and the community has benefited from receiving more than 62,000 hours of volunteer support. The needs are still great, however. Last year 887 unduplicated homeless families had to be turned away; to date in 2010, 481 have been turned away. Funding sources are drying up, and that will only exacerbate the problem. The dollars received from Bellevue are leveraged to bring in even more dollars. In June, a Hopelink graduate, who was also a resident of Johnson Hill, a St. Andrews Housing Group facility, was one of only three individuals invited to the White House to help announce the national strategic plan to end homelessness.

Ms. Ann Merklin, Emergency Assistance Program Coordinator for Catholic Community Services, thanked the Commission for its generous support of the Emergency Assistance Program, the Volunteer Chore Service program, and for Harrington House. She said the Emergency Assistance Program provides basic needs for the low-income, seniors and the disabled. Clients are served with utility assistance, rental assistance, food and gas vouchers, and shelter in the form of motel vouchers. The economy has increased the number of people in need of the services. To date in 2010, 171 Bellevue residents have sought and received assistance in terms of shelter; the goal for the year is only 150. The shelter bednight numbers have already reached 3975, far above the goal of 1500 for the year. Calls for utility assistance are way up, as are requests for food and gas gift cards and bus tickets.

Mr. Alaric Bien spoke as Executive Director of the Chinese Information and Service Center. He thanked the Commission for its continued support. He also spoke as a member of the board of the Alliance of Eastside Agencies, a coalition of over 40 health and social service agencies serving the Eastside. The press have been reporting that the economy is picking up, but that news has not yet filtered down to

those in need. Very high levels of demands for services continue to be seen by every agency. The Cultural Navigator Program has been seeing an increase in first-time service seekers, people who never before have had to seek help from others. Many of them speak no English. He shared with the Commission a success story that had a happy ending because of the Cultural Navigator program. He said he is proud to be a resident of a city that values human services and does something about them.

Motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Hoople. Second was by Commissioner Stout and the motion carried unanimously.

7. ACTION

A. Finalize General Fund and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Recommendations

Ms. Leslie called attention to the written testimony provided by some agencies, including Food Lifeline, a new agency for which additional funding was not recommended.

Mr. Adriano said he had been contacted by the World Impact Network relative to the Renewal Food Bank. He said the representative had some questions with regard to the recommendation of the Commission to hold their funding flat.

Chair Huenefeld Gese said it was her recollection that the Commission had decided to give the program a cost of living increase. Commissioner Stout said she remembered it that way as well, but pointed out that even that would not be much of a bump. The application sought funding three times higher than the last round, and that simply was not possible. She added that the program is included in the package for which the Commission will seek additional funding from the Council.

Commissioner Hoople pointed out that the city certainly has more of a history with the other food banks. The Commission turned down applications from the Renewal Food Bank a couple of times because of their specific practices; with those issues resolved, the Commission chose to fund the program. The fact that the program has been added to the additional funding list is an indication that the Commission is interested in the program.

Chair Huenefeld Gese agreed but asked if a cost of living adjustment should be given to the program as a show of good faith. She commented that if for some reason the Commission decides not to seek additional dollars from the Council, or if the Council turns down the request, the program funding will otherwise be held flat.

Commissioner Beighle said the main issue cited by the Commission for not giving the program an increase was as it has always been, the gathering of data. She allowed that the agency has taken some big steps in the right direction, however, and is doing a better job of gathering data.

Mr. Adriano said the staff monitoring efforts have turned up a lot of information about how agencies collect data.

Commissioner Yantis pointed out that none of the food bank programs had been given a significant funding boost. Chair Huenefeld Gese agreed but pointed out that one program received a cost of living increase and the other was fully funded. The question raised by Renewal Food Bank was why they were held flat.

Mr. Adriano indicated that a cost of living increase for Renewal Food Bank would total \$187.

Commissioner Stout commented that the funding for several of the applications slightly exceeded what a cost of living adjustment would have been. Commissioner Yantis said the Crisis Line 2-1-1 program was fully funded at \$24,912; that amount could be reduced to \$24,725, freeing \$187 to allocate to Renewal Food Bank.

Commissioner Beighle said the information shared by the representatives of The Landing was new information to her. She said she did not know so many were being turned away, or that those who get to stay are selected by lottery.

Assistant Director Terry Smith said the staff at Highland Community Center see The Landing kids all the time, some of whom are kids coming over from Seattle.

Chair Huenefeld Gese said she was impressed with the testimony from the representative for Eastern European Counseling. She said it was good to see how the various services interact.

Commissioner Plaskon commented that the Commission put a concerted effort into developing the proposed funding list and suggested it would make little difference to add \$187 to the Renewal Food Bank allocation. He noted, however, that he would be happy to make the change if the Commission deemed it a good idea.

Commissioner Stout said the change would be symbolic as much as anything.

Motion to reduce the allocation to the Crisis Line 2-1-1 program by \$187 and to increase the allocation to the Renewal Food Bank by \$187, and to approve and recommend to the Council the 2011-2012 allocations package, was made by Commissioner Hoople. Second was by Commissioner Bruels and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Leslie provided the Commissioners with a summary of the budget increase proposal. She said the finalized document would be submitted on July 21 to the results team, noting that from there it would go to the leadership team, then the city manager, and then to the City Council. She stressed that the document was not made part of the public hearing because it is part of an internal budget proposal that has not yet worked its way through the process.

Councilmember Chelminiak stressed the need to keep the focus of the request for additional funding from the Council on the need to address specific recession impacts.

Chair Huenefeld Gese agreed and pointed out that the proposed package is focused on the direct delivery of services to those in need. The programs chosen were selected based on the positive influence they can have on those impacted by the recession while not requiring agencies to hire additional staff to provide the services.

Commissioner Yantis suggested the Commission needs to be careful in labeling the funds as one-time only. He said what the needs will be in another two years cannot be predicted, and the Commission should avoid putting itself in the position of needing to ask for additional funds again and having to answer questions about what was initially referred to as one-time funding. The request should be phrased as addressing emergent needs.

Councilmember Chelminiak said he took from the public hearing testimony how important Bellevue funding is to agencies who use them to leverage other funds. Additionally, he said it was good to hear how interlinked the various agencies and programs are.

Commissioner Stout suggested a couple of corrections to the rationale for funding some of the programs. With regard to the Eastside Baby Corner program, she suggested that “directly impacts the economic recession” should be changed to read “directly addresses the impacts of the economic recession.” With regard to the KITH program, she proposed that as drafted it appears the housing is in Bellevue. She suggested revising the language to read “housing for Bellevue citizens at risk of homelessness.” With regard to the Eastern European Counseling Center program, she said she would prefer to leave out the phrase “but funding may possibly be considered in future cycles.” She said she would welcome language acknowledging the need for services to the identified population. With regard to the Bellevue College application for early learning and Head Start, she proposed changing “program provides critical early intervention for students” to read “program provides critical early intervention for children.”

Councilmember Chelminiak pointed out that the rationale for funding the St. Vincent de Paul application should indicate that the agency is new to Bellevue funding but is not a new agency.

Motion to approve the special request for recession impact funding as amended was made by Commissioner Yantis. Second was by Commissioner Hoople and the motion carried unanimously.

8. OLD BUSINESS – None

- 9. NEW BUSINESS – None
- 10. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None
- 11. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Huenefeld Gese adjourned the meeting at 8:21 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date