

The Human Services Commission approved these minutes on May 6, 2014

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

April 1, 2014
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Perelman, Commissioners Bruels, Beighle, McEachran, Plaskon, Stout

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Yantis

STAFF PRESENT: Emily Leslie, Alex O'Reilly, Joseph Adriano, Jessamyn Findlay, Department of Parks and Community Services

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ROLL CALL

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

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 4, 2014

Commissioner Stout called attention to the first paragraph on page 2 and noted that in the first sentence "...along with Commissioners..." should read "...along with Commissioners McEachran and Stout...."

A motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Commissioner Beighle. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Plaskon and it carried unanimously.

4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS - None

5. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Stout reminded the Commission that affordable housing and the possibility of some place to co-locate human services in the downtown will be the topic of the April meeting of the Downtown Livability Initiative CAC. She suggested it would be helpful to have some public comments made in support of the need at the beginning of the meeting.

Commissioner Bruels noted that enrollment for the Affordable Care Act closed on March 31. He said those who are eligible for Medicaid can apply at any time, and those who have experienced life changing situations, such as a new job, the birth of a child, a wedding or a divorce, can also apply at any time in between the open enrollment period.

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly said Eastgate Public Health has a new program under which they are able to take the parents of established children clients. Their other new population is young adults aged 19 and 20.

6. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Human Services Needs in the Community

Chair Perelman briefly explained that a public hearing regarding needs in the community is required before decisions are made about how to allocate the city's anticipated 2015 Community Development Block Grant award. She said the information received also would help to inform decisions about allocating the human services dollars from the city's general fund.

A motion to open the public hearing was made by Commissioner Plaskon. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Beighle and it carried unanimously.

Mr. Jaime Garcia, founder and current executive director of Consejo Counseling and Referral, thanked the Commission for partnering with the agency for the past nine years. He said funding from the city has allowed the agency to serve vulnerable domestic violence survivors and their children. According to the 2010 census, the Hispanic/Latino population represents 11.2 percent of Bellevue's total population, a 71.2 percent increase since 2000. The 2013-2014 demographics for the Bellevue School District report that six elementary schools, two elementary schools and two high schools have enrollments with more than 11 percent Hispanic students. As the Latino population continues to increase, access to service has become more difficult due to the lack of bilingual and bi-cultural services. Additionally, the demand for more integrated and crisis-oriented services for the community has increased. Consejo has seen an increase in referrals for services in Bellevue for housing, legal and immigration advocacy, and domestic violence and mental health treatment. One of the major barriers to service for the population is the fear of deportation and a lack of understanding about client rights. Also, funding for mental health services, especially

for non-Medicaid populations, is becoming more limited. The state of Washington has overestimated the amount of growth in Medicaid expansion due to healthcare reform and therefore has reduced non-Medicaid funding; that in turn has increased the demand for funding from local cities and private donations. Despite the challenges, Consejo remains committed to its mission of transforming, strengthening and empowering the Latino community. The multiservice program model has been leveraged to meet the needs of each individual and family entering the programs. The agency enjoys strong working relationships and informal working partnerships with numerous social service agencies and schools throughout Bellevue and the Eastside. The needs of local Latinos, as identified by the Consejo staff in the Bellevue office, include access to affordable childcare, access to affordable healthcare, housing, livable wage jobs, education, particularly ESL, domestic violence and sexual assault services, and issues associated with cross-cultural integration. In 2013 Consejo provided 463 hours of advocacy, individual and group counseling to 21 unduplicated Bellevue residents. Through the partnerships established with the Bellevue School District, the agency is seeing a younger population consistent with the census and demographic data for the community.

Ms. Ellen Hegenauer with Harrington House thanked the Commission for its continued support. She said the two-year transitional housing program is for women who are homeless and who are either pregnant or have very young children. Over the last two years the clients have presented with higher needs; while poverty is the root cause, the clients are increasingly chronically homeless, have mental health issues, and have criminal backgrounds. With less funding for human services, there is reduced access to services by the clients, particularly mental health services. The lack of funding has also contributed to fewer staff, each with higher caseloads. Harrington House hopes Bellevue will not reduce its funding for the next two years; the agency also partners with parishes and individual donors. The agency also is continuing to work with various foundations and does not anticipate any reduced funding from them.

Ms. Ann Johnson, a current resident of Harrington House, said it took her about a year to access the program. She said for most homeless people, access to services is not easy. She said she moved from place to place while pregnant and homeless, and with so many addresses it was difficult to receive mail in a timely manner, which resulted in DSHS closing her case. It was also difficult to get to doctor's appointments, DSHS appointments, or the WIC office. She said her life has improved by being at Harrington House.

Ms. Sarah Steininger, deputy director of Lifewire, which formerly was called Eastside Domestic Violence Program, said housing homelessness continue to be huge issues for the community. She said Lifewire works with extremely high-needs clientele, the survivors of domestic violence. One of the things found over the past several years is that client poverty levels have become much more extreme, and their barriers to safe and stable housing have become much more significant. The list of barriers to housing include criminal history, multiple

children, a lack of legal documentation in the country, limited English skills, and combinations of those things. Many are having to wait for significant lengths of time on the family housing connection list; Lifewire's clients wait an average of six months to a year. The gradual decline in funding over the past several years has been steady. Lifewire continues to be a healthy and vibrant organization, but many of the government contracts that over the years have been steady have begun to disappear. Clients continue to face hurdles in finding affordable housing. Lifewire provides a place to stay for a period of time, but eventually clients must live on their own and most simply do not make anywhere near enough to be able to pay market rate for housing, particularly in Bellevue, Redmond and Kirkland. For the past five years Lifewire has been operating the Housing Stability Program, a homelessness prevention and diversion program. The Gates Foundation helped start the program which uses flexible funds to address client needs immediately through eviction prevention, safe housing stabilization, income promotion, and meeting basic needs where housing stability is on the line.

Ms. Eileen Rasnack with Volunteer Chore Services, a program run by Catholic Community Services, said she continues to be amazed at the breadth of services the city is able to offer to individuals of all ages. The services offered by Volunteer Chore Services address basic needs such as transportation to medical appointments, the pharmacy and the grocery store, help with house and yard work, and minor home repairs. All of the people served by the program have either a functional disability or a developmental disability. For older adults, one of the biggest barriers is their fixed incomes, a large portion of which go for medical and housing costs. That makes it more difficult for them to obtain the services they need to remain in their homes. Volunteer Chore Services focuses on those who do not have the financial wherewithal to pay for services and who do not qualify for state-paid services. Ninety-percent of the program's clients are at 30 percent of median income. Over the past two years, residents in the over 65 bracket have increased by approximately 15 percent, and for those 85 and over there has been a 20 percent increase. Declining health is another barrier for adults as they age and is something that makes it difficult for them to be an advocate for themselves and to get the help they need.

Ms. Andrea Simmons with AtWork! thanked the Commission for its continued funding over the years. Thanks in part to funding received from Bellevue, the program, which provides employment services to adults with disabilities, was able to find jobs for 50 clients in 2013. Like many non-profits, the agency continues to see the effects of the recession in the lives of clients. There have been improvements, but there continue to be challenges. AtWork! has significantly changed its service model in response to the needs and desires of the people with disabilities who are served by the program. The program no longer operate a sheltered employment model on the belief that integrated employment is the best, most appropriate, and most cost-effective way to serve individuals with disabilities. The program continues to see increases in the incidence of autism spectrum disorders, particularly in clients coming into services through school transition programs. Clients with autism have a broad range of

support needs and the agency is having to constantly adapt to keep up with advances in assistive technology and supportive employment techniques. Transition students are at a critical point in their employment pathway. Studies have shown that when a student leaves high school without a job, their chances of ever obtaining competitive employment drop to just 20 percent. The issue is a growing focus area for AtWork! AtWork! is at the cutting edge of the service model and provides extensive training to its employment consultants, but while the achievements of the employment programs are wonderful, in some ways the agency is a victim of its own success. High-trained staff are in demand and are sometimes recruited away. The biggest barrier for clients, aside from finding jobs, is transportation. Many are served by Access, but the bus service can be unreliable; it is not uncommon for clients to be dropped off up to an hour before or after their work shifts are set to begin. Clients have lost hard-won community jobs as a result. Changes in how the fee-for-service government contracts are funded have reduced the hourly rate received and is proving to be a significant challenge going forward. The community access program rate was so significantly reduced and it may not be possible to sustain the program past 2015; the program serves retirement-age adults with disabilities and a few younger adults who need or want other services to earn a longer pathway to a community. Community access services are provided by the agency on an individualized basis; they keep clients engaged and active in their communities to the best of their abilities. Adults with disabilities like Downs Syndrome and cerebral palsy typically experience the symptoms of aging like physical disability or dementia much younger than the general population, so community access programs will continue to grow as the Boomer population ages. It costs AtWork! \$45 per hour to provide community access services, but the new contract has reduced the rate for the service to only \$28 per hour. The program is facing a \$75,000 budget deficit in 2014. The agency intends to apply for combined funding for the program for the first time and is hoping to find other ways to sustain it. Efforts to grow the social enterprises to ease the crunch on the mission programs are also under way; the commercial enterprises currently account for about half of the total revenues. AtWork! believes in the transformative power of employment for all citizens.

Mr. Michael McKee, director of health services and community partnerships at International Community Health Services, said the non-profit is newly arrived in Bellevue. He said the agency has over 40 years experience of providing healthcare in the International District and New Holly neighborhood in Seattle, and also operates a school-based health center. The agency is excited to expand its services to Bellevue. The agency is a federally qualified health center which historically has served predominantly Asian and Pacific Islander immigrant and refugee populations. The model of healthcare delivery addresses immigrant and refugee concerns in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways. As a non-profit community health center, the agency is required to serve anybody and everybody who walks through the doors regardless of their ability to pay, their insurance status, or their immigrant status. A sliding fee scale is offered that is based on client income levels, and it can slide to zero for medical services with just a small office visit fee. A needs assessment conducted in 2006-2007 identified the Crossroads area of Bellevue as

having an increasingly diverse population with unmet healthcare and social service needs. Establishing a presence in Bellevue has taken longer than expected because of the recession, but property has been acquired at 1050 140th Avenue NE and it is being renovated ahead of the May 1 planned date on which services will be begin to be offered. The Commissioners were invited to attend the April 22 open house from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. While partnering with Bellevue mini City Hall since October 2013 as part of the enrollment period for the Affordable Care Act, it was found that services are needed in Punjabi and Vietnamese as well as English. Funding is still needed for in-person assistance because enrollment in Medicaid continues. More importantly, in-person assistance needs to be expanded to address the health literacy concerns for newly ensured populations who may have never before accessed healthcare. Specifically, a great need has been identified in Bellevue for dental providers who accept Medicaid.

Ms. Enrica Hampton with Kinderling Center said one of the many services offered by the agency is early care and education consultation. She explained that education consultants such as herself go out to childcare and preschool programs in the city of Bellevue and complete child observations and developmental screening, and their work with families in guiding them to appropriate resources. The education consultants also work with the childcare and preschool providers to develop strategies to help support children in the program. She thanked the Commission for its generous and ongoing support that has made it possible for Kinderling Center to provide the invaluable service to Bellevue residents. Over the last two years, the program has directly supported more than 200 individual children and families. She shared with the Commission two stories about children served. There has been a steady increase in the number of children, especially preschool-aged children, presenting with emotional and sensory regulation issues that significantly impact their social successes in group settings. There has been a steady increase in the number of children who will later be diagnosed as having an autism spectrum disorder. Children displaying limited coping skills that frequently result in disruptive and distracting behaviors are in the increase, and the parents of such children are struggling to find childcare for them. Many childcare and preschool providers are completely overwhelmed. Where consultation services are utilized, however, children who may have normally been expelled from programs are retained, families are able to access services and resources sooner, and providers report feeling more comfortable supporting children with special needs and behavioral challenges. The funding provided by Bellevue has helped to make the program a reality.

Mr. Steve Roberts, executive director of Congregations for the Homeless, said the program provides services for homeless men on the Eastside and assists them in making the transition from life on the street to long-term stable living. He said he could not be more proud of the city in the way it has supported the program and the Eastside winter shelter. The space in the Sound Transit facility on 120th Avenue NE is large and the number of shelter residents increased by a factor of two over previous winters. The numbers have remained high even as temperatures have begun to warm up. The shelter program that rotates from church to church currently

serves 40 men and includes a full complement of case management services along with medical and dental services. Congregations for the Homeless also operates 65 subsidized housing units. The winter shelter program has lately encountered in the community a much higher use of heroin than has been seen in the past and that has created some problems for the low-barrier shelter, including increased public safety concerns that triggered the need to add staff. The day center, operated in the church at the corner of NE 8th Street and 108th Avenue NE, will be relocating given that the facility has been sold; fortunately there are still sixteen months before the problem must be solved. The center provides a full complement of services, including washing facility, food, showers, and case management. The program has added job placement services which so far in 2014 has placed 14 men in jobs. Funding received from document recording fees, which is used for housing, has been reduced. The winter shelter and the day center both are operating at maximum capacity.

Mr. Derek Wentorf with Friends of Youth agreed that affordable housing is a big challenge facing young adults. He said the agency in its outreach and shelter services is also seeing an increase in heroin usage and all of the ramifications that go with it. While recently there has been an increase in the number of jobs available, youths seeking employment are having to compete with a broad pool of workers, and they end up at the bottom of the pool. Getting them prepped and ready is a challenge for Friends of Youth. The agency recently received funding from King County to start an employment program targeted toward youth and young adults. The program will be run out of the Redmond service center but will serve youth across the Eastside. The agency is also poised to launch a family reunification effort in partnership with Catholic Community Services. Unfortunately, there is a growing need in Bellevue around commercially sexually exploited youth. Both the demand and the number of young people falling into the life is increasing. Friends of Youth has been working with Youth Care for quite a while on the issue, and a full-time case manager has been brought on board to work with Eastside youth. The Bellevue police department along with the Seattle police department and the King County sheriff's office has been leading the nation in thinking about the young people involved as victims rather than perpetrators. With regard to funding sources, he said Friends of Youth has funding for its street outreach program that will run through the end of calendar year 2014, but those dollars are expected to be tight beginning in 2015.

Ms. Susan Gemmel, 2-1-1 director for the Crisis Clinic, thanked the Commission for its support of the 24-hour crisis line and the teen link group. She said she gets contacted for information about the needs in Bellevue from Bellevue more than anywhere else, so obviously the community cares. The types of services asked for have not changed much over time; the primary focus continues to be on basic needs, including housing and shelter, financial assistance for rent and utilities, and food. She said 2-1-1 makes referrals to all of the providers in the community. Due to funding cuts, it has become very difficult to retain staff. The program tries to have between eight and ten bilingual staffers at any given time, but once they are trained

and knowledgeable about the services in King County, they are recruited away. Burnout, particularly around the housing issue, also seems to be increasing. While the economy has improved, people are still calling with multiple needs. The barriers to service include the complexity of the social service system. Transportation has always been a high unmet need and it continues to be a problem. Dental is a big need. Low-income persons trying to get help also often use up their limited cell phone minutes trying to get help. No funding reductions for the program are immediately anticipated. The King County 2-1-1 organization is investing \$265,000 to underwrite the program to make up for that amount of funding lost when the economy went down. Hopefully Bellevue will have the system on its legislative agenda for next year. Crisis Clinic is the entry point for coordinated entry for the county; partners with In Reach to do basic food screening; partners with the department of health around chronic disease education; and on the national level is working with My Free Taxes, and the Centers for Disease Control on the possibility of being the point of contact to disperse calls in the case of a big event.

Ms. Sophia Leucke with the Refugee Women's Alliance, said she is a victim advocate for sexual assault and human trafficking victims and works primarily with the Russian, Ukrainian and Romanian populations. She said the agency is thankful for the funding received for Bellevue that is used to provide support groups for victims. The group experiences result in real healing for victims of sexual abuse. She shared some success stories with the Commissioners.

Ms. Gigi Meinig with the Area Agency on Aging gave the Commission a heads up about a program that addresses food insecurity. She said the program is for people who do not have enough money to buy nutritious foods. Each year the state provides funds for the senior farmers market, giving low-income seniors a \$40 voucher that can be exchanged for fresh fruits and vegetables at farmers markets. The area agencies throughout the state administer the program each year, and in King County the enrollment process will run from April 15 to May 15. Applicants must be residents of King County with a King County mailing address; be 60 years of age or older; and be low-income at 185 percent of poverty. The program is very popular and typically the area agency does not have enough vouchers to give out; those who did not receive vouchers for 2013 will be prioritized in 2014. Information and referral organizations have information about the program. She also explained that the Farm to Table project links senior meal sites and Seattle childcare programs to local area farms with the goal of getting local and organic produce into some of the Seattle's most underserved communities.

Ms. Helen Banks Routon with Eastside Baby Corner said the program has been well supported by the city of Bellevue for many years. Bellevue funding is a critical component of being able to serve kids in the community by serving the agencies that serve the kids. In 2013, Eastside Baby Corner gave out just under \$1 million worth of goods in about 13,000 orders. Diapers are a major cost item for the program along with food and car seats, all of which are given out using community donations and volunteers.

A motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Bruels. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Beigle and it carried unanimously.

7. OLD BUSINESS

Grant Coordinator Joseph Adriano informed the Commission that the city has received notice from the federal government regarding the 2014 CDBG allocation. He noted that the allocation will be just under \$5000 more than the 2013 allocation. That triggers the contingency program under which the entire amount will go to the Home Repair Program.

Ms. Leslie said budget man Doug Sanner will attend the Commission's April 15 meeting to talk about the city's budget process. She said the assumption is that the status quo will be continued relative to funding human services. Word on the street is that there will be some requests for new investments brought forward during the budget process, though it will be up to the Council ultimately to decide if they should be funded. Several of the requests are things that were cut during the last budget cycle.

With regard to the need for a new day center location for homeless men in downtown Bellevue, Commissioner Stout said she felt Steve Roberts should be asked to address the Downtown Livability Initiative CAC at the meeting on April 16 to tell the story of his work.

Commissioner McEachran said he was willing to attend the meeting as well and provide some testimony.

8. NEW BUSINESS - None

9. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS - None

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Perelman adjourned the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairman of the Human Services Commission

Date