

The Human Services Commission approved these minutes on March 17, 2015

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

February 3, 2015
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Perelman, Commissioners Bruels, Kline, McEachran, Plaskon, Villar

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Beighle

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

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 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 Perelman, who arrived at 6:43 p.m., Commissioner Plaskon, who arrived at 6:45 p.m., and Commissioner Beighle, who was excused.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. January 6, 2015

A motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Kline. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Villar and it carried unanimously.

4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Anna Cherkasov spoke representing the Eastern European Counseling Center. She said the organization is located in Bellevue and was founded in 2008 with a focus on serving the Eastern European community. In 2014 the agency served 304 people, 74 of which were from Bellevue. Of the total served, 183 were dealing with behavioral health issues; 121 were survivors of domestic violence or their families; 51 were elderly or disabled. In addition, 681 referrals were made for housing, education,

employment and other needs. Several clients received pro bono services. The agency conducts outreach in the community and that has led many to come to the agency when they find they need some help with culturally competent in-language services. The agency staff know and understand those from the Eastern European communities far better than someone who just speaks the language can therefore gain the trust of the clients by asking culturally appropriate questions.

Commissioner Villar asked what the EECC program does to educate clients who might move out of the area and have available to them services that are not necessarily culturally specific. Ms. Cherkasov said the domestic violence program deals with people in crisis who need help immediately, mostly women and children. The immigrant immigration project primarily works with people who have moved to the United States and are having a hard time adjusting. In every case staff works with the clients to determine their issues and to develop a plan for them.

Answering a question asked by Chair McEachran, Ms. Cherkasov said the organization itself is quite small with just a clinical director and three counselors, but it enjoys a large number of volunteers.

Jason Chang introduced Stephanie Ho and said they are both doctoral students of nursing practice from the University of Washington. He said they were present to observe and absorb.

5. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Chair McEachran said he recently had the opportunity to meet with the director of Imagine Housing. He said the organization appears to be quite stable during the transition and is considering a groundbreaking in the Totem Lake area for more than a hundred units of senior housing.

Chair McEachran said he read with great interest the Downtown Livability Initiative report which lists affordable housing as a potential new amenity.

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly reported that the One Night Count was held the morning of January 23. Commissioner Beighle once again led one of the teams. Overall King County saw a 21 percent increase in homeless persons counted, but the Eastside saw a 17 percent decrease.

Human Services Manager Emily Leslie said the decrease could be accounted for in part by the fact that a tent city that typically is located on the Eastside is currently located in Seattle.

Ms. O'Reilly reminded the Commissioners about a strategic planning briefing from United Way of King County on Thursday, February 5, at the Bellevue regional library from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. In the briefings held to date the agency has discussed high-level themes and the general message has been on their effort to continue

focusing on certain investments. At the briefing earlier in the day a number of people were present advocating for continued funding for senior centers and older adult services.

6. DISCUSSION

A. Review of CDBG Applications

Grant Coordinator Joseph Adriano called attention to the package of CDBG applications and noted that the Commission would be asked to have a recommendation ready for the Council to review on March 2. He noted that the four non-construction capital project applications were from the Bellevue Boys & Girls Club, Congregations for the Homeless, Salvation Army, and Senior Services Minor Home Repair. He pointed out that the requests total \$261,025 and the amount available to allocate is estimated at \$180,000.

Mr. Adriano explained that two additional ideas could be funded with CDBG funds, bringing the total request amount to \$313,000. The HUD rules allow for a certain amount of CDBG dollars to be spent on public service. In years past the Commission has avoided pushing up against the cap limit, which for the coming year would be \$17,765. One option would be to allocate those funds to the men's winter shelter, an amount sufficient to keep the shelter open for an additional two or three weeks. If the allocation is made, it would be wise to revisit the adopted contingency plan for 2015.

Mr. Adriano said the second option would be to allocate \$35,000 to the Major Home Repair Program. He explained that while the entire CDBG allocation to the city could be given over to the program, resulting in the least administrative burden, doing so would require the program to ramp up to a degree that would not be possible. An allocation of \$35,000, however, could be used to address projects that could be completed in a matter of months.

The Commissioners were informed that three of the four agencies submitting CDBG applications indicated they could still make their projects work if awarded less than their full request.

Commissioner Bruels observed that if the Boys & Girls Club and Salvation Army requests were removed, the available funding would be the right amount to fund the other applications.

Commissioner Kline said it was her understanding that the majority of people served by Senior Services are not Bellevue residents. Mr. Adriano said anyone served by the Minor Home Repair Program with Bellevue CBDG funds would have to be Bellevue residents.

Commissioner Bruels noted that in the past there have been problems with the Boys & Girls Club relative to eligibility, and the Commission has recently looked to agencies other than the Salvation Army to provide services.

Commissioner Perelman pointed out that the Boys & Girls Club enjoys a partnership with the city that needs to be fostered. To not fund the request could send the wrong message.

Commissioner Villar said the challenge with the Boys & Girls Club is that it does not meet the 51 percent requirement. Mr. Adriano allowed that they fall just shy of that mark, which is a problem with a lot of agencies. Many agencies funded by the city have a policy that if a household does not want to volunteer its income level they are counted as unknown in the reporting system. The Boys & Girls Club certainly has gotten caught up in that. The Commission has not yet come up with a policy against that. It likely would not be difficult for the Boys & Girls Club to come up with the percentage it needs to meet the 51 percent requirement established by CDBG.

Commissioner Kline said her guess would be that the higher percentage of those who are not reporting are probably not low income, and that those who are reporting are more likely to need the tuition breaks and scholarships.

Mr. Adriano said the city has successfully funded programs in the past that have not met that criteria, including the architectural and engineering request from Youth Eastside Services. What happens is the program is tracked for a year after being funded and then they are closed on the city's books. He added that whenever there are questions for how to proceed, staff consults with HUD.

Commissioner Kline asked what ramifications would be faced by funding a program that is not at the 51 percent level. Mr. Adriano answered that it would be a violation of the regulations, and when that happened in a jurisdiction in the Northeast the penalty was to pay the money back to HUD.

Commissioner Villar said she would not support a motion allocating funds to Boys & Girls Club unless the funding is made contingent on the agency being able to prove they are at 51 percent. Commissioner Kline suggested asking for a ruling from the city's Legal Department relative to the city taking the risk of having to pay back the funds.

Ms. Leslie allowed that if the funds are made contingent, the agency would not be able to use the funds unless they prove they meet the requirements.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Villar, Mr. Adriano said should the program not reach the 51 percent threshold, the city would be on the hook to refund HUD. The city's contracts with agencies, however, do include language for getting money back where targets are missed.

A motion to allocate \$31,210 to Boys & Girls Clubs of Bellevue for the new main clubhouse, \$35,000 to the Major Home Repair Program, \$17,765 to Congregations for the Homeless for the Eastside winter shelter, \$68,000 to Congregations for the Homeless for permanent low-barrier shelter, and \$28,025 to the Senior Services Minor Home Repair Program, was made by Commissioner Perelman. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bruels and it carried unanimously.

By way of rationale relative to not funding the Salvation Army request, Commissioner Perelman said there were questions about religious activities, their lack of collaborative partnerships, and the fact that they have the capacity to raise funding from other sources. With regard to the Boys & Girls club allocation, it was noted that they also have the capacity to raise funding from other sources.

7. DISCUSSION

A. Community Conversations for 2015-2016 Human Services Needs Update

Ms. O'Reilly commented that different activities related to the next iteration of the Needs Update are being launched. One of those activities is the community conversations. She noted that in the packet was a list of groups and organizations with whom conversations were conducted in 2013 and the Commissioners indicated which of them they would like to have participate again. Commissioner Perelman suggested Eastside Pathways should be added to the list; Chair McEachran proposed adding Bellevue College student services representatives as well as various ethnic groups; Commissioner Bruels suggested Hero House and Therapeutic Health Services; and Commissioner Villar suggested including people with chronic illnesses as well as disabilities, including family members, and people who work but do not live in Bellevue.

Ms. O'Reilly said she will be checking in with the manager of the North Bellevue Community Center who is also responsible for older adult services in the city, as well as the manager of the Highland Community Center where historically support services have been offered to persons with disabilities. She added that in April the city will be co-hosting a forum with Seattle/King County Aging and Disability Services which is updating its area plan on aging.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Perelman, Ms. O'Reilly said she would check with the survey company to see if there might be a way to distribute the survey to those who are part of various distribution lists and who would not have received a letter with a code for taking the online survey. She said the target sample size is 400 and it usually takes a couple thousand letters to get there.

8. OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Kline commented that \$31,210 is a sizable drop from the \$100,000 requested by the Boys & Girls Club and suggested there might be a risk the agency would not want to go through the hassle of receiving and reporting on the CDBG funds for that low an amount. She suggested the Commission might want to develop a contingency plan.

Commissioner Bruels asked if the Minor Home Repair Program could use an additional \$31,210 should the Boys & Girls Club turn down the allocation. Mr. Adriano said the \$28,025 request from Senior Services likely represents the amount the program can handle.

Mr. Adriano said Congregations for the Homeless was clear in stating that any amount of funding would be helpful.

Commissioner Kline pointed out that if the Congregations for the Homeless allocation were to be reduced by half, the allocation to the Boys & Girls Club could be increased close to \$65,000.

Ms. Leslie cautioned against developing a contingency plan that would lead to the allocation for one agency being reduced in order to increase the allocation to another agency. Mr. Adriano said the better approach would be to hold off making a decision on the actual allocation amounts to allow for gathering more information regarding the minimum amount the Boys & Girls Club would accept.

Commissioner Plaskon pointed out that the Boys & Girls Club project covers multiple years and he said he did not anticipate the agency electing not to take the \$31,210. Commissioner Bruels concurred and said if an issue arises it can be addressed by the Commission at a later date.

Mr. Adriano added that ARCH has indicated if there are funds left over they have projects to which the funds could be applied. Commissioner Bruels said if that is the case any of the voted allocations are rejected, the funds could be given to ARCH.

A motion to allocate any declined funds to ARCH was made by Commissioner Kline. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bruels and it carried unanimously.

Ms. Leslie announced that the Commission's second meeting in February had been canceled to accommodate attendance of the joint boards and commission meeting on February 25 to review the draft Comprehensive Plan update. She also said the human service commissions from Kirkland, Redmond and Issaquah have been invited to attend the Commission's March 3 meeting. Mark Putnam will present the strategic plan for the Committee to End Homelessness; Arthur Sullivan will provide an update regarding a permanent winter shelter; and an update will be given on coordinated entry issues.

9. NEW BUSINESS - None

10. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS - None

11. ADJOURNMENT

Chair McEachran adjourned the meeting at 8:03 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date