

The Human Services Commission approved these minutes on April 19, 2016

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

March 15, 2016
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson McEachran, Commissioners Bruels, Mercer, Oxrieder, Perelman, Villar

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Kline

STAFF PRESENT: Emily Leslie, Alex O'Reilly, Dee Dee Catalano, 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 McEachran who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Perelman, who arrived at 6:52 p.m., and Commissioner Kline, who was excused.

3. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Katherine Ombrellaro, adult co-chair of the Youth Link board, introduced two members of the Youth Link board.

Mr. Zach England, a member of the Youth Link Board, said the first Youth Involvement Conference will be held at Meydenbauer Center on March 25. All middle and high school students from public, private and home schools are invited to attend. Dr. Terrance Roberts, one of the Littlerock Nine, will be the luncheon keynote speaker; he will be introduced by Mayor Stokes. After lunch, Dr. Roberts will hold an invitation and adults-only session on racial equity. He invited the Commissioners to attend. He also announced that the 18th annual Youth Link Gumbo Night will be on April 27 at the home of David and Sherry Grindeland, and the Commissioners were invited to attend that event as well. It was further announced that the annual Community Leadership Awards are scheduled for May 25 in Council Chambers, with

a reception starting at 6:30 p.m. and the program starting at 7:00 p.m. The Commission was invited to serve as a presenter at the ceremony.

Mr. Joydeep Hazva, a member of the Youth Link board, has partnered with three youth organizations to address youth homelessness, creative mentorships and equity. Youth Link will promote support for agencies that focus on youth homelessness throughout the Eastside. New alliances will be created and existing partnerships will be utilized to create a better understanding of the root cause of youth homelessness, and Youth Link will work with disadvantaged youth to advance change. Youth Link also intends to work with a variety of local businesses to develop career and mentorship opportunities with the goal of assisting youth with career planning and addressing youth unemployment through programs such as Youth Link University. With regard to equity, Youth Link will engage in partnership opportunities with a variety of diverse organizations to create a higher understanding of equity issues that impact children and youth in the Bellevue area.

Ms. Katherine Ombrellaro said Youth Link will continue to impact youth engagement in the areas of leadership, projects, partnerships, equity and diversity. Youth Link will utilize youth involvement and youth conversation to accent and promote youth voices to public bodies, such as the school board, the Human Services Commission, to keep all informed as to upcoming and vital youth issues. Youth Link will continue to work with its partners the Bellevue School District, the Parks and Community Services Board, and the Human Services Commission, as well as the City Council, to share information regarding outreach to youth, youth agencies, and to identify the pressing needs of children and teens in Bellevue. She thanked the Commission for its continued support of Youth Link.

4. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Chair McEachran reported that he recently had opportunity to sit in on a community conversation around diversity and equity at Bellevue College.

Human Services Manager Emily Leslie reported that it is the fundraising season in the non-profit world. She said she attended the fundraising luncheons put on by Friends of Youth and the YWCA, and will be attending the upcoming Youth Eastside Services breakfast.

5. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Human Services Needs in the Community

A motion to open the public hearing was made by Commissioner Oxrieder. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bruels and the motion carried unanimously.

Grant Coordinator Dee Dee Catalano explained that the city is required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development to conduct at least two public hearings annually to address human service needs for both the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the general fund. She noted that the testimony provided would be taken into consideration by the Commission in reviewing applications for funding. The second public hearing will be held in July after the Commission releases its preliminary funding recommendations.

Ms. Catalano pointed out that the Commissioners had been provided with the written testimony received from International Community Health Services, Assistance League of the Eastside, and Crisis Clinic.

Ms. Beth Monkash, a resident support supervisor for Imagine Housing, addressed the largely underserved population of folks with household incomes that exclude them from low-income housing and other resources but who cannot afford market-rate rents on the Eastside. Those people include Starbucks baristas, employees at Target, food service workers, new teachers, administrative and janitorial staff, without whom businesses would not be able to function. When high-end market-rate housing is in peak demand and is incredibly lucrative, developers are not incentivized to build more modest houses or apartments. Likewise, public funds and resources are used to produce housing for the most vulnerable, including those who are without homes, leaving a large gap for those in need of middle-range housing. Those in that gap are often forced to move elsewhere to find housing they can afford. Andrews Glen in Factoria operates a transitional housing program through the Veterans Administration in which veterans and their families coming from homelessness are assisted in obtaining permanent housing. Several veterans who have been able to secure full-time employment fall into the gap of earning too much to qualify for low-income housing but not enough to be able to afford market-rate housing in the area. Some have found that their only option is to rent a room in a house shared by strangers. Bellevue as a community must acknowledge housing as a basic human right. Imagine Housing is seeking solutions to ensure that people can live in the same community in which they work and attend school. Hopefully one day east King County will be known as a place where everyone, regardless of income, will be able to live and contribute to their community in ways that will create a vibrant place they can call home.

Ms. Adi Sherman, Social Service Coordinator for The Salvation Army Eastside, thanked the Commissioners for the support it has in the past provided to the organization. The assistance received has gone directly to support those in need on the Eastside. Over the past two years changes have been seen in the types of clients provided with assistance. There has been an increase in families going into homelessness due to a lack of low-income housing. There has also been an increase in domestic violence, and in the number of clients from the Muslim community. The need for affordable housing, case management and programming is clear. The lack of affordable housing is the biggest emerging issue facing clients of the agency. Barriers regarding access to health and human services include a lack of dental and

prescription medications coverage by Apple Healthcare; the coverage is not enough to meet basic needs. Affordable childcare is another barrier; the income of many clients keeps them from qualifying for DSHS benefits, but is not enough to afford full-rate childcare. For the upcoming year, no changes in funding or funding sources are anticipated. It was noted that the Salvation Army's new building will be completed in October, at which time the Commissioners will be invited to tour it.

Ms. Hollianne Monson with Catholic Community Services said she works as the Program Manager for Volunteer Services of King County, formerly known as Volunteer Chore Services. She said the program provides assistance to low-income seniors and adults with disabilities in the form of household chores ranging from cleaning to grocery shopping, as well as transportation to doctor's appointments. The goal is to assist seniors and adults with disabilities in being able to remain living independently in their homes. Eighty-six percent of those served in 2015 by the volunteer-run program had incomes of 30 percent or less of the area median income, and there was a steady rise in the number of persons just above the 30-percent mark. There has also been an increase in the number of clients facing significant medical costs. During 2015, the program provided 35,729 hours of service to a total of 705 clients, all at cost to the recipients. Funding received from the city of Bellevue was used specifically to serve 52 people throughout the year. The agency will be losing United Way funding for the 2016-2017 fiscal year as that organization moves away from providing funding for senior programs, even though the projections from the Area Agency on Aging show that seniors will comprise 25 percent of the total population by 2040.

Ms. Barbara Langdon with Lifewire said the mission of the organization is to end domestic violence. The agency is primarily based on the Eastside and provides housing, a helpline, prevention and advocacy. Some 5000 are served annually face-to-face in addition to fielding some 10,000 helpline calls every year and helping some 25,000 annually through prevention programs. Domestic violence crosses all cultures, ages and economic scales, though Lifewire primarily serves low- to moderate-income families. The agency has a reputation of serving the hardest to serve. Emergency shelter is provided in individual apartments that can accommodate a range of clients. The transitional shelter involves communal living for women with drug and alcohol problems as well as domestic violence problems. The need for affordable housing is clear in the area. In the coming year the potential for domestic violence agencies to lose funding from United Way is present. On the positive side, funding from Best Start for Kids will be available starting in about June and will in part be allocated to the Eastside. Domestic violence is the leading cause of homelessness among women and children. Lifewire has two shelters totaling 20 units, which is not enough to meet the demand. Lifewire partnered with the Gates Foundation five years ago to implement a model program aimed at preventing homelessness that results from domestic violence. The housing stability program is critical. Fully 91 percent of the clients served a year ago remain housed after six months, and the program is cost-effective. Support for the program will be sought from Bellevue.

Ms. Deanna Hamamoto, a Mental Health Counselor and Teen Center Advocate Program Coordinator with Asian Counseling and Referral Service (ACRS), thanked the Commission for its ongoing support of youth programming. Over the past two years more Latino teens have expressed fear of deportation and shared stories of actual deportations. The programs attempts to mitigate their stress by providing information that lets them know where to go for help. Shifts observed in terms of funding and staffing at the agency include recruitment, training and retention of qualified staff who are bilingual and bicultural. Funders are looking for evidence-based practices. The list of emerging issues, she said there has been an increase in the number of sexual abuse cases, particularly among Asian/Pacific Islander young women. The need for more specialized support groups has increased, particularly around cyber bullying, social media abuse, self abuse and suicidal clients, and those in need of more specific psychiatric care in the areas of depression, anxiety and stress. There has been a rise in truancy school avoidance, generational conflicts with parents, and immigrant and refugee parents who are not able to navigate the school system. The barriers clients have faced in accessing services include poverty and related problems; the prevalence of parents with private insurance not wanting their children to see private counselors because of the high deductibles; and access to mental health counseling due to confidentiality issues for youth above the age of consent, which is 13, who live in potentially unsafe homes. ACRS anticipates the funding shifts on the part of United Way will negatively impact programs. Medicaid-paid mental health reimbursement rates continue to lag behind the market rate of cost of living, increasing in relation to the minimum wage hike and potential Department of Labor ruling. The Department of Labor is proposing to update the regulations governing which executive, administration and professional employees are entitled to the Fair Labor Standards Act minimum wage and overtime pay protections. If the ruling goes into effect, there will be a significant impact on social service agencies.

Ms. Esperanza Borboa, Program Director at Eastside Legal Assistance Program (ELAP), said the agency is the only non-profit legal aid organization serving low-income individuals and families in Bellevue and other parts of east King County. The agency provides 22 legal advice clinics monthly on the topics of family law, immigration, bankruptcy and general law, and administers a wills project, organizes free community lectures, and provides legal services and support to domestic violence survivors. The Family Law Fellowship Program, created a couple of years ago, takes newly barred attorneys and trains them in family law. Over the course of a year, the lawyers provide 600 hours working with domestic violence survivors; at the end of the year they become volunteers with the organization offering pro bono work in family law at the clinics. In 2015 ELAP provided services to over a thousand low-income individuals and survivors of domestic violence; the impact extended to more than 2500 persons, many of whom were children. More than 160 volunteer attorneys donated more than 2200 hours during 2015 which at \$300/hour was valued at \$660,000; those hours do not include the hours donated by the general volunteers who keep the programs running smoothly. An one-dollar investment in ELAP yields three dollars worth of service. More non English-speaking clients are coming to

ELAP, which requires use of over-the-phone interpretive services. The most recent Needs Update references a study requested by the Washington State Supreme Court that was administered by the Office of Civil Legal Aid that found that in 2013 low-income individuals in the state experienced on average three legal problems per year; by 2015 that number had grown to nine legal problems annually, and 19 for the survivors of domestic violence. ELAP staff and volunteers are running to catch up to the increase in the number of persons in need of services. ELAP operates in partnership with a number of organizations, including Hopelink, the King County Library System, Sophia Way, Consejo, Northwest Justice Project, the Northwest Immigrants Rights Project, and the King County Bar Association; without those partnerships, ELAP could not do what it does. ELAP is actively involved in a statewide effort to establish goals and strategies to address the ever-widening gap in legal services for low-income individuals and families. The financial support received from the city is appreciated and will be needed going forward. Funding generally has remained stagnant as needs have grown.

Ms. Angela Murray with Sophia Way thanked the Commission for the emergency funding for the second winter shelter. She announced that families have been kept at one shelter and single adult women at the other, an approach that is working well for all involved. The list of trends noticed over the past year includes unemployment and underemployment. Most clients are struggling to find jobs, but often when jobs are found they do not pay enough to afford paying rent. The average age of the shelter clients is the low- to mid-50s, a challenging age for any woman who has been unemployed for any amount of time. The clients face both age and body discrimination given that many of them have health issues and are challenged with obesity. She shared a couple of client stories to illustrate the issues they face. Most clients need help to navigate the unemployment system. Many also have significant mental health issues that contributes to making them dysfunctional.

Ms. Helen Banks Routon with Eastside Baby Corner thanked the Commission for its support over the years. She said the agency helps children thrive by providing the basics for children aged zero to 12 by collecting, purchasing and distributing goods through a network of provider partners. The program has continued to grow over the past year to where families can access Eastside Baby Corner services through 43 programs and sites. During 2015, there was a five percent growth in goods ordered overall in the city, with particular increases in orders for baby food and infant formula, the prices of which continue to increase. The number of diapers provided during the year increased by 100,000 to a total of 860,000, a 13 percent increase over 2014. Eastside Baby Corner exists to help the service providers who provide direct services to clients with children, so all the trends that impact those agencies are reflected in the orders received. A quarter of the providers worked with are schools, but another 19 percent are housing programs, and 18 percent go to early learning programs. Home visitation programs account for ten percent of the goods delivered, and food banks come in at six and a half percent. A little over 24 percent of all Eastside Baby Corner distribution went to the city of Bellevue in 2015; the goods were valued at little

over one million dollars. Trend items include computer needs; the agency works with a non-profit that refurbishes laptops for distribution to families.

Ms. Hillary Rossi, a Project Manager for AtWork!, explained that the agency provides vocational services for people with disabilities. She thanked the Commission for its funding over the years. The agency now serves 265 people with employment and retirement services. There are now 31 employment consultants at the agency and 72 persons were placed in jobs in 2015. More school-to-work clients are being seen, which are clients who come directly from high schools. Continued funding will be needed to continue providing employment services. People with disabilities have a very high unemployment rate nationwide. The agency has added a Social Security benefits planner who helps first-time job seekers obtain benefits. There is also an assisted technology department that provides assessments for those with very high barriers to employment; the use of iPads to assist those who do not speak naturally has helped to increase placements.

Ms. Megan Altimore with Hopelink thanked the Commission for its support for and leadership shown in the human services arena. She provided the Commissioners with copies of Hopelink's Impact Report, noting that the report includes a full statement of the services offered by the agency in fiscal year 2015. Across the service organization, 22,400 people were served in 2015. Of those, 5267 were within the city of Bellevue. The services delivered ranged from food to emergency financial assistance, housing, heating assistance, employment, case management and financial coaching services. The agency provided \$840,000 in direct financial assistance to Bellevue residents, and 850,000 pounds of food through the food bank and the emergency feeding program. The diversity of the populations served continues to increase year by year. The number of older residents served are continuing to increase as well. For seniors to access the food they need, the agency is working to make it as easy for them to obtain as possible; additionally, because canned goods are heavy, it is necessary to make sure it can be delivered to exactly where they need it. The agency has also experienced a very large increase in the number of persons 55 and above in the employment program, making it necessary to focus on appropriate placement services and jobs that fit their skills. Overall, Hopelink's Bellevue building continues to serve more and more people. There is a waiting list for every service offered except food; the desire is to see the level of services increased to meet the need. The lack of affordable housing is a huge issue, as is homelessness. The shortage of affordable housing, the low vacancy rate, and the increase in rents are all contributing to homelessness. Increasing opioid addiction has also added to the challenges being faced. Hopelink will be losing significant funding for the housing program, and adult education and employment funding continues to be difficult to find for the hard-to-serve populations. The financial assistance program is being converted to a more flexible pool, and a financial coach can now be accessed through the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

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

****BREAK****

Chair McEachran asked the Commissioners to reflect on the testimony given.

Commissioner Mercer said she made particular note of the agencies that mentioned other agencies with which they collaborate. She said she also had been intrigued looking through Hopelink's theory of change.

Commissioner Oxrieder asked if the message delivered in previous public hearings has been as on point about things getting worse. Commissioner Perelman allowed that that message comes through every year. While the specific trends differ, agencies are consistent in saying the needs are increasing and more funding is needed to address the need.

Commissioner Bruels commented that much has been heard lately about United Way shifting its funding priorities, but nothing has really been said about where their funds will be going instead. Ms. O'Reilly explained that United Way will be putting their money toward Opportunity Youth. They have created a new youth council and have classified as opportunity youth those who are not succeeding in school. Often those are youth of color and part of their strategic plan is to keep opportunity youth from entering the criminal justice system. As United Way shapes up its specific funding picture, it would be appropriate to invite a representative to address the Commission and outline how their funds will be allocated.

Commissioner Villar said the testimony confirmed for her that while there is always a message of great need, it was clear that the lack of affordable housing is creating problems other than just homelessness. Commissioner Perelman concurred. As housing costs increase, it becomes necessary to choose between paying the rent and buying food, or an insurance deductible, or needed medications, or legal assistance.

Chair McEachran said he heard a clear undertone focused on the need for stability and sustainability. He said the testimony also highlighted the needs of the aging population.

Commissioner Bruels said he appreciates the fact that many agencies are trying to expand. There is no such things as stasis in business, there is only expansion and contraction. However, given the significant lack of basic needs many in the community are facing, it would be good to hear more about how agencies are seeking to be more efficient in delivering services and meeting the needs.

6. DISCUSSION

A. Logistics for Application Review Process

Ms. Catalano asked the Commissioners their preference for using a rating sheet or an application scoring sheet and noted that a decision would be needed before the Commission's next meeting. Ms. Leslie said the recommendation of staff was to use a rating sheet. Other city's commissions find the tool useful to aid in discussing applications.

Ms. Catalano shared with the Commissioners a sample rating sheet and sample application and indicated how the tool can be used to review the major points of an application. She said the applications are divided into several sections, including program description, service system coordination, program accessibility, service units and outcomes, and budget. The rating sheet asks specific questions regarding each section to aid in generating a rating score. The functionality brought about through the ShareOne app allows for automatically totaling the scores as they are entered.

Commissioner Bruels asked how the scoring data is used once it is generated. Ms. Leslie said the Commissioners will be reviewing the applications by teams of three, and the scoring by the members of each team will only be for the applications their team reviewed. The ShareOne app adds all the scores and makes it possible to quickly see where the members of the team feel about individual applications. The scores are for evaluative purposes only and are not used to determine actual funding.

Commissioner Mercer observed that the scoring questions as drafted make it appear the focus is on scoring how well the grant application is written rather than the content of the application.

Asking a question asked by Commissioner Villar, Ms. Leslie confirmed that the scorecards are public records.

Commissioner Bruels said he assumed the data entered in the ShareOne app will also be used in the second review. He asked if the information from the scoring can be used as part of the rationale for either funding or not funding an application. Ms. Leslie said it could be used in that way.

Commissioner Perelman pointed out that for an agency like Eastside Baby Corner, which has no peer, the question about the degree to which the application effectively describes how the program differs from other programs would generate a score of zero, as would the question about the agency demonstrating cultural competency. In that instance, the scoring would not adequately reflect the value of the purpose for the application. Ms. Leslie suggested the scoring would in fact help to focus the Commission's discussion. The Council has for many years instructed the Commission to assess all applications on the criteria areas outlined in the scoring

matrix. She reiterated that the scoring is only a tool to aid the first-round discussion, not a fact sheet used to determine funding.

Commissioner Mercer said her experience has been that rating sheets are very useful. It should, however, actually rate the content of the application rather than the application itself.

Commissioner Villar commented that an application that receives a very low score could still end up being fully funded given the points raised during the second review. In that instance, the score would not make a very good rationale. Ms. Leslie allowed that she did not know exactly how it would all play out. The intent is to have an additional tool that will help inform the rationale, though not one that will serve as the only rationale or to determine actual funding.

Ms. Catalano said her experience in the past with using the scoring tool has been that there is a balancing act between using the scores as a tool to generally indicate funding or not funding a particular application, and using the scores in ways that are too absolute.

Commissioner Mercer said she was leaning toward using the scoring tool, but urged staff in the future to have the Commission focus on it and work out any issues earlier when the application materials are being developed. Ms. Leslie agreed but reiterated that the questions are written as they are to reflect direction handed down by the Council.

There was agreement to give the scoring process a try.

Ms. Catalano said the applications would be available to the Commissioners either in hard copy or in electronic format.

7. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. O'Reilly said a question was asked at the last Commission meeting about any agencies who have already indicated they will be seeking additional funding, and Sound Generation was one agency mentioned specifically. She said she has heard that Sound Generation has launched a new fundraising campaign aimed at filling in the gap triggered by the loss of United Way funding.

Commissioner Bruels remarked that the visit to the International Community Health Services a year and a half ago included taking a look at their new dental clinic. He said in his professional capacity he recently came across a patient in need of dental care and made a referral to International Community Health Services. The person found, however, upon arriving for his appointment that the program has a flat fee of \$45 for preventative and minor dental care, and a discount of only 25 percent for all major dental care. He commented that a discount of that amount is standard in terms of what is available for cash services at any given clinic, much less a clinic that is

supposed to be serving low-income clients. He said he called the clinic and confirmed that that is their policy, and added that it is quite different from the impression given the Commission in choosing to fund the program.

9. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Leslie said the next Commission meeting will include a presentation and update about the Home Repair Program as well a formal orientation to the funding process. Doug Sanner will also highlight the city budget process.

10. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

11. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Bruels. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Villar and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair McEachran adjourned the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date