

The Human Services Commission approved these minutes on September 4, 2014

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

July 24, 2014
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

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 6:16 p.m. by Commissioner McEachran who presided until the arrival of Chair Perelman.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Chair Perelman who arrived at 6:48 p.m.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. June 17, 2014

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

B. June 24, 2017

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

4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS - None

5. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Plaskon reported that in 2004 there was a case involving a member of the foster care system. The State was asked to get involved in the way kids were being moved around in the foster care system. That led to a ten-year oversight of the DSHS system by several law firms in town with the idea that DSHS would eventually be relieved from the oversight after completing the 21 parameters established for them to reach. On July 21 DSHS was back in court with a showing that 12 of the 21 parameters have been met and were on the way to completing the others. The court held that that was not good enough and has put DSHS under observation for another 18 months.

Commissioner McEachran reported that he toured Velocity, the Imagine Housing project at the South Kirkland Park and Ride, on July 23. Solid progress is being made on the 50 apartment homes for which 481 families have applied. The names have been added to the waiting list that has 2,317 families on it.

Councilmember Chelminiak reported that the City Council has a budget mini-retreat scheduled for July 28. He said most of the work done to date on the budget has been focused on the CIP.

6. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Proposed Use of 2015-2016 General Fund Human Services Funding and 2015 CDBG Funding

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

Ms. Susan Annond, a member of the Eastside Legal Assistance Program board of directors, thanked the Commission for its consistent funding. ELAP provides legal services to low-income residents of the Eastside. A new family law fellowship has been started that will allow ELAP to serve nearly twice as many domestic violence survivors annually. Applications from attorneys newly admitted to the bar will be accepted until September 1 and the successful candidates will begin the year-long fellowship on October 1 with an intensive week-long training; they will start offering services to domestic violence survivors the following week. Additional training will be provided them weekly throughout the fellowship period.

Ms. Chris Brandt, AtWork! CEO, an employment services organization serving adults with disabilities in Bellevue and across King County. She said the funding provided to the organization by the city over the years has been greatly appreciated. Using funding from Bellevue, the organization was able to find jobs for 50 people with disabilities in 2013 and is on track to place about 60 in 2014. Like most non-profits, AtWork! continues to feel the effects of the recession, including some job layoffs. AtWork! has significantly changed its service model: where previously the

organization supported 150 people in sheltered employment, now it supports more than 200 in community jobs. Over the last five years, persons with disabilities have earned some \$6.5 million. The city's support of the community liaison position and the transitional employment consultant has made the transition possible and has helped AtWork! become a national leader in the customized employment movement. The organization is concerned that funding for the transitional employment consultant application was reduced by 50 percent. Fewer people are being served by that specific program because so many have been moved out of the sheltered workshop, but there are still people in the landscaping and recycling businesses earning sub-minimum wages who are on a pathway to community jobs. The consultant coordinates job discovery activities for individuals who have been in service for a long time; exposes clients to different types of job paths; and assesses the potential of clients and develops a profile that can be marketed to an employer. Studies have shown that the longer someone stays in a sheltered work environment, the harder it is for them to move into community work environments. Over the next two years, one of the main focuses for the consultant will be to help people not languish in the program. There are 4000 persons in King County waiting for service, many of which are in Bellevue.

Ms. Joann Jacob, an AtWork! client, said she has been employed in the community but lost her job and is seeking new employment. Ms. Brandt said Ms. Jacob's job coach has been taking her to different places as part of her transition counselor activities. The employer thus gets to test the skills of clients. The reduction in funding for the counselor will not result in elimination of the position, but it will result in fewer people being served and will slow down the overall transition. The Commission was asked to reconsider funding for the transitional consultant. Ms. Jacob added that she wants independence and a career in order to have a secure life into the future.

Ms. Andrea Simmonds with AtWork! thanked the Commission for its long-term support and for making it possible to truly change lives. With regard to the community access program, which serves retirement-age adults with disabilities and a few younger adults who need or want other services, she said community access services are provided on an individualized basis predicated on each client's interests and needs. The community access specialists keep clients engaged and active in their communities by assisting them in participating in volunteer work and clubs to ensure that once they retire they will not become isolated. Changes in how the fee-for-service government contracts are funded have reduced the hourly rate received for the service to the point where it may not be possible to sustain the program past next year. The \$75,000 budget gap may mean that more than 30 seniors will lose the service. Asking for city funds to fill a budget gap is an unusual move and the agency is exploring every avenue to find funding for the program. The Commission's preliminary recommendation was not to fund the application. The Commissioners were asked to reconsider and provide the application with any amount to help leverage funds from other providers.

Mr. Nathan Heuser, a housing manager with Hopelink, said he works at Hopelink Place, a transitional housing site for homeless families with children. The staff at Hopelink Place work with clients and their families to identify and address barriers, securing permanent housing, and developing the skills needed to exit poverty. He thanked the Commission for continued support of Hopelink. Bellevue has been a leader in advocating for the needs of low-income and vulnerable community members and its support helps Hopelink serve thousands of residents each year with a variety of basic needs and skill building services designed to make them, and by extension, the entire community healthier and more productive.

Ms. Amy Mack, president and CEO of Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Puget Sound, thanked the Commission for considering funding the organization's first-time application. While not recommended for funding, she said she has taken note of the Commission's desire to see the organization partner with other mentoring organizations in the community and will take it to heart. She said some children in the community are currently being served by the organization with stimulus dollars, a funding source that ended in October 2013. The agency is working hard to continue serving those children even though loss of the funding represents a \$67,000 gap in the budget.

Ms. Ellen Hegenauer thanked the Commission for its support of the Harrington House program, a transitional housing program for pregnant women and women with infants. She said homelessness continues to be an issue and it is good the city is working with Catholic Community Services to address the issue. Harrington House does anticipate serving fewer Bellevue clients in the coming year but will continue looking for efficient ways to address homelessness.

Ms. Chrisita Novares, a domestic violence advocate with Consejo, thanked the Commission for recommending funding. She said the agency will continue to strive to transform, strengthen and empower clients in the community. The domestic violence program includes a self-development group and an educational group, and provides advocacy for domestic violence survivors through the court process. The organization is strong in part because it offers so many different services and because it partners with organizations such as ELAP and Hopelink.

Ms. Carla Julio, a therapist with Consejo, remarked that often domestic violence survivors filter into the mental health department. The clients are often refugees and immigrants and even if they have insurance through DSHS, mental health services are not covered. Funding from the city by extension helps keep the therapy program up and running. The work done by Ms. Novares is incredible and involves spending hours of time with each client to get the information needed to build and present cases to Immigration.

Ms. Rae Levine, interim executive director for Sophia Way, thanked the Commission for its continued support of the program that serves homeless women on the Eastside. She said her mission in the coming months will be to work with and

strengthen the organization and programs by working with the staff and the board. The city's support of homelessness and housing is commendable.

Mr. Klaas Nijhuis spoke representing ARCH. He thanked the Commission for its continued support and said the CDBG funds allocated to the organization represent a very important part of the funding stream. CDBG funds from the past several years totaling \$157,000 has been committed to the preservation of Bellevue Manor, which offers units for low-income seniors.

Mr. Steve Roberts, director of Congregations for the Homeless, explained that the housing and shelter program has been operating since 1993 and has the highest graduation rate to permanent housing of any agency in King County. He thanked the Commission for funding the application. With regard to the Eastside Winter Shelter application and the Commission's recommendation to fund only \$36,000 of the \$90,000 requested, he allowed that there is a strategic element involved about which Congregations for the Homeless is working with the city and Sound Transit to provide. The shelter provided 10,000 bednights during the winter season, and more were signed up in April than in November. He said the drop-in center operates in downtown Bellevue but must find a new location by May 2015. The outreach element is also important and is funded jointly by the participating cities.

Ms. Erica Horn, executive director of Hero House, thanked the Commission for being a consistent supporter. She said the organization now has more than 500 members and is serving about 200 per year. In 2013 the program received the King County Exemplary Service Award for Social Inclusion and Advocacy. The award showcases the fact that the organization believes in involvement at all levels of the organization. She said the focus is on growing the board of directors in order to increase community support and its network. Hero House will in 2014 celebrate its tenth anniversary. It continues to operate with minimal staffing, something that is done purposefully to allow members to fill leadership roles. The application included information about emergency preparedness that has since changed. Over the last seven weeks the agency participated in intensive workshops attended by all members and staff in partnership with the Alliance of People With Disabilities. The cities of Bellevue and Kirkland participated by sending representatives from their departments of emergency preparedness. FEMA Corps also participated in the training. The agency has also launched a program aimed at improving the health of its members. With regard to employment statistics, eight persons found work in 2013 earning collectively over \$160,000. Ten have already found jobs in 2014. The retention rates continue to be excellent. She thanked the Commission for its continued support.

Ms. Julie Manion, a member of Hero House for five years, said upon joining she had lost all of her support and was essentially unemployable. She said she learned how to use a computer, and learned she was good at advocacy and took training from NAMI, the Crisis Line and Lifewire. She said she has been working at a treatment

center for two years and is currently enrolled at Bellevue College to become a chemical dependency counselor.

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

****BREAK****

7. DISCUSSION

A. Finalize Human Services Funding Recommendations

Commissioner Beighle called attention to the AtWork! transitional employment consultant application and said it was her understanding in formulating the recommendation that full funding was not needed because of the reduced number of clients in the program.

Commissioner Plaskon said it was his understanding the counselor is already doing the work part-time, which is in line with the decision of the Commission to fund only half of the request. He allowed that it can take a lot of time to find jobs for the clients.

Commissioner Bruels observed that in the past funding for the position has been cut and that is why the agency is seeking new funding. The Commission previously discussed the fact that it should not be in the position of backfilling cuts from other funding sources; that simply is not a criteria the Commission can use as a primary reason for funding programs. Referring to the memo about supplemental requests from the Council, he asked if the balance needed to fully fund the application could be added to the list. Human Services Manager Emily Leslie suggested that while that might be possible the chances of success are pretty slim.

Commissioner McEachran said the argument made by the agency representative were compelling, but he said the Commission was in full agreement in recommending what it did for the application. He said he was not willing to see the recommendation changed.

Commissioner Beighle asked if there had been any follow-up regarding Harrington House. Ms. Leslie said staff has a meeting scheduled with ARCH to talk about the potential changes to the model.

A motion to approve the recommended general fund allocations was made by Commissioner Bruels. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Beighle and it carried unanimously.

With regard to the CDBG applications, Grant Coordinator Joseph Adriano explained that an error in an equation means there will be less funding available than originally anticipated. He recommended that one way to make things balance would be to

reduce funding for the Major Home Repair Program to \$535,430. The Commissioners agreed to make the change.

A motion to approve the recommended CDBG allocations as amended was made by Commissioner Bruels. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Villar and it carried unanimously.

There was agreement to approve the contingency plan as well.

Ms. Leslie reported that following the July 1 Commission meeting staff met to talk about the applications and programs the Commission was not able to fund. The result of the meeting was a list that could be funded if the Council approves additional dollars. The Budget One process is under way and the funding proposals have been ranked and the results will be presented to the City Council on July 28. One of the items included in the budget proposal was the facility costs for the winter shelter; it was not recommended for funding by the results teams. The conclusion reached was that funding for budget enhancements simply will not be there, and in fact some basic city services will see some reductions. During the winter months, the city spent almost \$38,000 on utilities and repairs for the winter shelter and the funds were drawn from the budgets of the Parks and Community Services and Planning and Community Development departments.

Commissioner McEachran asked if the other cities are willing to share some of the utilities costs. Ms. Leslie said she has reached out to the cities of Kirkland, Redmond and Issaquah. Redmond provided \$7500 during the winter season which allowed for purchasing appliances for the shelter. While there has been no word yet as to whether or not the other cities will be able to find some dollars, they certainly understand the importance of the shelter and what it takes to operate it. It is also possible Congregations for the Homeless will be able to generate some funds through fundraising efforts. Steps are underway to facilitate a new lease with Sound Transit for the building and an attempt will be made to negotiate the facility costs down.

Commissioner Bruels suggested the Commission needs to be able to come to the Council with some compelling reasons for why additional funding is needed over and above what has already been approved for general fund allocations. He pointed out that the winter shelter is a program Bellevue conceived and pushed through. The whole impetus for the program was that people were dying on the streets during the winter months, and that focus has not changed. He also argued the economic benefits of childcare, which allows families to be able to work and achieve self sufficiency. Dental services, which are left out of the Affordable Care Act, are also vitally important for a variety of reasons. The research is clear that dental hygiene correlates to overall health.

Commissioner McEachran concurred that additional funding is needed to address the winter shelter and dental care, but said he was less convinced that additional funding should be sought for childcare subsidies.

With regard to the childcare program, Chair Perelman noted that half of the ask is for the Jubilee REACH ESL. She said the Commission after a great deal of discussion elected to fund only half of the application. The Commission could seek funding to fully fund that application. Mr. Adriano clarified that the only childcare application not fully funded was the one from Jubilee REACH.

Commissioner Plaskon suggested that making an argument in favor of the winter shelter should be a fairly easy task. Clearly the issue is survival. Dental and childcare services are needed but neither falls into the survival category.

Commissioner Beighle said if she were to prioritize the list, she would put the winter shelter at the top, followed by dental services and then childcare.

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly noted that the Jubilee REACH childcare program is different from the other childcare programs funded in that it provides childcare while the parents are attending ESL classes.

There was consensus to recommend additional funding for the Congregations for the Homeless winter shelter and International Community Health Service dental services.

Councilmember Chelminiak explained that the recommendation of the Budget One results teams will be reviewed by the Leadership Team. Things always get adjusted to some extent before the City Manager delivers a budget to the City Council. Money continues to be tight and every dollar is important. Funding the winter shelter and dental would require about \$64,000 the first year of the biennial budget and \$66,000 the second year, which in the greater scheme of things is not a lot. Funding the winter shelter would be a good step forward given that the city is pushing hard to have a permanent winter shelter. A solid argument can be made regarding the need for dental services, as indeed for childcare.

Councilmember Chelminiak asked if cuts were made to other programs that might be just as important as childcare. Chair Perelman said funding for the Congregations for the Homeless drop-in center were made simply on the basis of the program not having a permanent home; the service itself, however, is very important. Commissioner Bruels said he had concerns about cutting funding for that program as well.

Commissioner Plaskon said in terms of overall impact, the winter shelter is more compelling than the drop-in center. To include in a recommendation for additional funding the dental and childcare pieces could actually water down the importance of the winter shelter.

Commissioner McEachran concurred. He noted that collectively there are huge efforts under way to assure shelter, transitional housing and affordable housing. Commissioner Bruels suggested that a review of the minutes and the Commission's recommendations will reflect the fact that every effort was put into squeezing every last dollar out of what was available. The proposal that was put forward represents the Commission's best faith effort. He agreed, however, with the need to highlight the need for additional funding to address the clear need.

Councilmember Chelminiak said he would support the recommendation of the Commission for additional funding for the winter shelter and the dental services.

A motion to approach the Council with a request for additional funds for the Eastside winter shelter as outlined in the staff memo was made by Commissioner Plaskon. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kline and the motion failed 2-4 with Commissioners Plaskon and Kline voting for, and Chair Perelman and Commissioners Bruels, McEachran, Beighle and Villar voting against.

A motion to approach the Council with a request for additional funds for the Eastside winter shelter and the International Community Health Service dental care program as outlined in the staff memo was made by Commissioner Plaskon. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bruels and it carried unanimously.

7. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Leslie reported that the 2014 CDBG funding has been received. She also noted that a State audit of the City's CDBG program is under way.

Ms. Leslie said staff was notified that The Sophia Way had hired Rae Levine to serve as executive director. Ms. Levine is a consultant with experience serving various organizations as executive director. Her specialty is helping organizations that are in transition.

8. NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Plaskon asked how agencies actually get their funding from the city. Mr. Adriano said a contract is negotiated with each agency based on the recommendations. The negotiations are focused on adjusting service units to the funding amount. The agencies must submit reimbursement requests to the city; some do so monthly but most do so quarterly. Reimbursements are predicated on the service units provided as outlined in their reports through share1app.

Commissioner McEachran highlighted the fact that the Commission had previously discussed having an event at the South Kirkland Park and Ride to showcase the housing coming online as a result of collaborative impact. He also suggested that in the fall a visit should be arranged with Renewal Food Bank.

Chair Perelman agreed and suggested that relative to the food bank visit it would be a good idea to visit the Hopelink food bank at the same time.

9. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS - None

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Perelman adjourned the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date