

The Human Services Commission approved these minutes on January 3, 2018

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

November 21, 2017
6:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Commissioners Kline, Ma, McEachran, Oxrieder, Perelman

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Chairperson Mercer

STAFF PRESENT: Alex O'Reilly, Dee Dee Catalano, Christy Stangland, Department of Parks and Community Services; Councilmember Robinson

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Vice Chair Kline who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Perelman, who arrived at 6:13 p.m., and Chair Mercer who was excused.

3. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

4. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Oxrieder noted that along with Commissioner Kline she visited Jewish Family Services and learned particularly about their refugee and immigrant services. She said she had not previously realized that the bulk of the work done by the agency is conducted in Seattle. She said the two of them also visited and participated in an ESL class, and learned about the job placement services offered by the agency.

Commissioner Kline added that they met with the director of immigrant and refugee services, who is based out of South King County, and with the employment services director. The latter mentioned that Jewish Family Service recently launched a pilot program focused on job placement for highly skilled immigrants. The organization

also tried offering a coding program but admitted there are kinks to be worked out.

Commissioner Oxrieder said the agency representatives allowed that transportation is a challenge for their clients. They are talking to Uber about making some kind of deal. Commissioner Kline added that the agency has received some free passes from Uber and is working with the Uber person who oversees outreach efforts.

Councilmember Robinson asked what percentage of the refugees served by the agency are from the Eastside or from Bellevue. Human Services Planner Christy Stangland said the majority of clients served at the Jewish Family Service Eastside location are from the Eastside. There are large refugee and immigrant populations in Kent and Seattle and that is why the services are more robust in those areas.

Councilmember Robinson commented that Expedia has an employee that works with the transition team specifically to help refugees transition into jobs with the company. She added that the city applied for the federal tech hire designation that provides funding for coding programs. The approach requires creating an alliance with tech companies in Bellevue, including Expedia and others, who must agree to give the individuals priority for hiring if shown to be capable. The city's tech hire program has not yet been launched.

Commissioner Kline added that Jewish Family Service mentioned they have relationships with virtually all of the hospitality type organizations on the Eastside and make placements with them. From the comments made, it sounded as if the agency is not able to keep with the demand. She said she encouraged Jewish Family Service to make contact with Bellevue College and seek to partner with that organization.

Commissioner McEachran said the faith community in which he participates annually promotes what is called Commitment Sunday. This year the executive directors from Congregations for the Homeless, Sophia Way, Imagine Housing and Lifewire were invited to attend and speak to their missions. Councilmember Robinson attended as well. The amazing exchange took place in the fellowship hall and included about a hundred attendees. The four executive directors had never before collectively shared the overlaps of their missions and the exchange was very valuable and was evidence of the power of collaborative impact.

Commissioner McEachran also noted that for the past ten years Congregations for the Homeless has been provided with office space at no cost by his faith community. Now that the city has provided the organization with new executive office space, the space at the church is available to another organization. He said it appears Eastside Pathways may take over the space.

Councilmember Robinson reported that on November 20 the Council passed three ordinances, all having to do with the homeless population. The first was a parking ordinance that does not allow parking for more than a 24-hour period in one spot. The second ordinance prohibits the unlawful dumping of sewage, which has been an

issue with some RVs. The third ordinance prohibits camping on all city owned properties and public easements, and establishes a date for when that will go into effect. The ordinances are part of the big picture of dealing with homelessness. Given that the city has put restrictions on where homeless persons can be on their own, it is incumbent upon the city to find a place where they can be. There is a clear need to create a program that will address the overall needs of the homeless population.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Oxrieder, Councilmember Robinson allowed that some faith communities are looking at ways to provide safe parking places for people who are living in their cars. The parking ordinance approved by the Council is intended to address the RV campers who have resisted assistance and outreach efforts. Many in that group are dumping sewage in the gutters and sidewalks along with used needles.

Commissioner McEachran pointed out that the city funds those who at night reach out to the homeless, and he asked if those persons are aware of the change the ordinances will bring about, which could give the outreach workers opportunity and an in when offering help. Councilmember Robinson said Congregations for the Homeless was involved in the development of the ordinance. The Council was focused on being humane while at the same time incentivizing people to make good decisions. The outreach workers say it takes 12 contacts or more to get a homeless RV person to agree to accept help; it is not enough just to knock a time or two.

Councilmember Robinson reported that quite a number of qualified persons had applied to fill the vacant Commission seat. She said in making the appointment she focuses first on those candidates from underrepresented neighborhoods, followed by a review of their qualifications and experiences. Staff are also asked to weigh in. The list of applicants has thus been narrowed down to three who will be interviewed between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Councilmember Robinson said she does not make her selections based on diversity alone. Commissioner Ma commented that there is some bias toward persons of privilege given that often those of lower income status do not have the time needed to serve on the Commission. Councilmember Robinson agreed and said there have been applicants who in the past have experienced in their own lives the need for human services and who have worked past those challenges. She allowed that for those who are still struggling, their energies are primarily focused on just getting by.

5. DISCUSSION

A. Presentation on Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy

Human Services Manager Alex O'Reilly said the King County Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy was approved by the voters on November 7 by a fairly high margin. She allowed that human services staff are busy tracking the various initiatives and efforts in the county and she asked Grant Coordinator Dee Dee

Catalano to provide an overview.

Ms. Catalano said the levy, which originated in 2005 and was renewed in 2011, for the first time now includes seniors. The levy rate has now doubled from five cents per thousand dollars of assessed valuation to ten cents, which means in 2018 there will be about \$52.3 million to spend in a three-way split. Of the funds going to seniors, half will go to seniors who are also veterans until 75 percent of the veterans who are homeless have achieved some level of housing stability, or until \$24 million of the non-veteran dollars is spent to house homeless senior veterans.

Ms. O'Reilly said she asked how the number of seniors who are veterans will be determined. The explanation given was that the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data, which is drawn from shelter and transitional housing system, will be used to make the determination. She said she did not know how persons in low-barrier shelters do not have to give any information about themselves might get counted as senior veterans. Christy Stangland said it was her understanding that the shelters do ask for that information. Ms. O'Reilly said the HMIS database lists about 380 persons who have identified themselves as veterans and that was the number used to calculate the allocation percentages. Every state that receives federal funding is mandated to have HMIS databases.

Ms. Catalano clarified that once 75 percent of the 380 senior veterans in the HMIS database are housed, the senior dollars will no longer be split and will be freed for allocation to all seniors. The transition plan outlines how the 2018 funds will be spent. The current levy expires at the end of 2017 and the focus is on making sure dollars for currently funded programs will not suddenly stop. Accordingly, the current programs will continue to be funded until RFPs are put out for the new levy relative to funding the five major investment areas. In the first year of the levy, 50 percent of the total funds in all three areas must be spent on housing stability, which can include keeping people in their homes by preventing evictions and foreclosures. Dollars will also be available for senior centers, which as defined can include community centers that provide services to seniors.

Commissioner McEachran said he has been hearing from his contacts the need for more dollars for sustainability. He said some agencies, including Imagine Housing, are working to develop social impact investment portfolios as a way of keeping up with the needs. It will take some time to develop the process and system for distributing the levy dollars and actually serving those for whom the dollars are meant.

Ms. O'Reilly said the transition plan is being worked on, as is the implementation plan, both of which will need approval from the King County Council. When King County staff come to the Commission in February, the details will be more fleshed out. Because the city's funding cycle begins in March, with applications due in April, agencies that are likely to receive levy funds may not know by then how much if any of the levy funds they will receive, thus they may make application to the city for

funding.

Councilmember Robinson asked if a caveat could be attached to any funding from the city stating that should an agency receive levy funds later they must return what was allocated from the city. Ms. O'Reilly said did not know if that could be done.

Commissioner Kline said the agencies most likely to fall into that category would be those working with seniors. There are oversight measures in place for veterans and vulnerable populations, so it can be assumed that to some degree allocations to those areas will be business as usual. Ms. O'Reilly said that is yet to be determined given that the governance structure will be changed.

Commissioner Oxrieder pointed out that part of the reason for adding seniors to the levy was due to the huge loss of United Way funding. She asked if there is any sense of how much will be gained over what was lost and what types of services will be covered. Commissioner Kline allowed that there has been a gap in place given that the United Way funding stopped more than a year ago, and the new levy funds will not kick in for a while yet. She added that in reviewing applications, the Commission will need to make a point of asking the question of agencies. It is doubtful it will be apparent in the applications themselves.

Ms. Catalano said the county is currently engaging the community to gain input about how to define success in the areas of housing stability, financial stability, social engagement and healthy living. The outreach effort includes community meetings in various cities and an online survey that is currently live. Commissioner Perelman urged the staff to include a link to the survey on the city's website to enable getting the word out about the survey.

Christy Stangland said she has attended quite a few of the community engagement events put on by King County and found most of them to have fairly large turnouts. Commissioner Ma voiced concern over the county only getting data from the seniors who show up for the meetings. There are other senior populations, especially those from immigrant and refugee communities, that are far less likely to attend and participate in meetings. Ms. O'Reilly said she would be happy to circle back and ask King County staff about their particular efforts to reach the immigrant and refugee communities as well as other senior populations.

6. DISCUSSION

A. Final Discussion 2017-2018 Human Services Needs Update

Ms. O'Reilly noted that the city's graphics artist has been working with staff to develop infographics for the Needs Update. She said several of the infographics have been completed, but not all of them yet.

Christy Stangland commented that the Needs Update document remains a work in

progress. Typos are still being found and corrected, and some formatting still needs to be done. Missing from the document is an update to the community profile section; new data was released in September and the city's demographer wants to include the most up-to-date information. The chapter on homelessness was only recently completed; the delay was intended to make sure all the work in the city regarding homelessness is fully reflected. The new updated sections will be mailed out on December 15. The complete draft that will be forwarded to the Council for approval will be sent out toward the end of December or early in January.

Christy Stangland called attention to the funding criteria and the focus areas from the previous supplemental. Ms. O'Reilly said the document is part of what the agencies see when applying for funding.

Christy Stangland asked the Commissioners to take a few minutes to voice what they have noticed to be new or increasing needs. The issues included health insurance if the Affordable Care Act is done away with; the opioid crisis and behavioral healthcare; dental care; homelessness prevention; affordable housing; transportation generally and innovative programs to fill the transportation gap for accessing services; and financial stability.

Ms. O'Reilly said one option would be to take the headlines from the human services section of the Comprehensive Plan and use them as an outline for a conversation regarding focus areas.

Commissioner McEachran said the increasing demand for services, funding, complexity of service provision, access to services and the human services continuum pretty much covers it from the 20,000-foot level.

Commissioner Ma suggested that financial stability cuts across a number of topics. Transportation is a cost, as is housing, and finding ways to reduce costs in those areas would make it more possible to maintain basic needs. Ms. O'Reilly agreed and noted that increased education and training in order to obtain a livable wage job also falls into that category. Jewish Family Service is doing a great job educating folks so that they can increase their capacity to find higher wage jobs. Similar programs offered by Hopelink and Bellevue College are also funded by the city. The Commission could elect to increase funding in that area.

Commissioner Kline said she did not have the feeling that there is a shortage of funding in the jobs training area as there is in providing emergency assistance.

Commissioner Ma commented that the senior exemption for property tax is huge for many seniors, as is the Home Repair Program. He said it would be good if the Commission could find industries in the area that have a need, like hospitality or tech, and specifically chose to fund agencies that provide training for those jobs. Commissioner Kline allowed that that is already happening to some degree, including through the coding program referenced by Councilmember Robinson. The program

offered by Jewish Family Service is unique in that it takes immigrants and refugees who are already highly trained in their home countries and helping them find jobs by gaining the language or other skills they need to gain employment that pays a good wage. Commissioner Ma said he was thinking of Bellevue College and other school programs that might funnel students toward jobs in specific sectors where there are specific needs.

Christy Stangland said the YWCA has a program called Bank Works that takes that tack. The eight-week intense course enjoys a very high job placement rate.

Commissioner McEachran pointed out that the city's economic development staff recently gave a presentation to the Wilburton CAC in which they stated that only 36,000 of Bellevue's residents actually work in Bellevue; more than 100,000 commute into the city every day to work. The challenge lies in determining where to deliver the goods. Commissioner Kline said it certainly comes back to the issue of collaboration given the need to have someone with access to the population that needs the help and who can connect them with the services that exist. The training programs exist, the challenge lies in connecting the programs with those who need the training. Transportation is often the missing link.

Commissioner Oxrieder asked if the Commission could choose to put out the word that it is looking for programs that bring all the pieces together in ways that have not previously been done that would enable folks to obtain better paying jobs and be able to afford to live in Bellevue. Ms. O'Reilly said that approach could be shaped into a focus area.

Commissioner Perelman pointed out that the previous focus areas continue to be top priorities, namely children and families, older adults and persons with disabilities living independently in the community, employment training, and housing to address homelessness. Transportation is certainly a continuing need, as is the current opioid epidemic. Ms. O'Reilly agreed with the notion of adding a bullet point on the opioid crisis. There is only one adult treatment program that serves Bellevue residents, Therapeutic Health Services, which the Commission funded at nearly their full request during the last funding cycle. Commissioner Perelman added that going into the next funding cycle the Council should ask every applicant if they are in the running for funds from the veterans, human services and seniors levy as a way of making the city's dollars go farther.

Commissioner Kline said it could be stated that the Commission is looking at an expansion of services. Christy Stangland said that is happening across the whole funding world. Some organizations will only fund innovative new ideas; that certainly was the approach utilized by United Way in its last funding cycle. Commissioner Kline clarified that she was thinking more along the lines of expanding existing programs, not necessarily seeking out new programs.

Commissioner Ma commented that some of the opioid crisis is the result of

physicians prescribing the drugs. He suggested focusing on health services for low-income individuals to prevent them from getting into a cycle of opioid addiction. He added that in fact many low-income families avoid seeking healthcare services because they cannot afford it. Services that provide basic medical coverage might help to stem the tide of addictions.

With regard to job training programs, Commissioner Perelman said there have been programs funded previously by the Commission that did not meet with great success. One program was focused on training immigrants and refugees on how to open and operate a business, but the technology used did not mesh with the realities of business in Bellevue. She said it is a good path to follow, but some research should be done to see if there are better examples out there.

Commissioner Ma voiced support for the continuum of services for children, youth and families. He said he would like to see agencies participating in the local schools on things like the cradle to career concept. Ms. O'Reilly said Eastside Pathways has at least two collaboratives that work with different age groups within the school district that might be worth researching.

Commissioner Kline said she would like to see mention made of the need for legal services. Ms. Catalano noted that she had met earlier in the day with staff from Eastside Legal Assistance Program and learned that civil legal aid is particularly understaffed in East King County.

Ms. O'Reilly pointed out that the Commission has several roles, one of which is funding. Other roles include planning and convening. While the Commission cannot fund everything, it can exert some influence from a planning perspective so that agencies can know what the Commission sees as the needs. Transportation is an issue in point around which the Commission can work throughout the year with the transportation department, with the Bellevue Network on Aging, and with economic development.

Christy Stangland noted that additional conversations with the Commission on determining focus areas are planned for upcoming meetings.

Commissioner Perelman referred to the draft Needs Update and said she appreciated having the highlights and the comparisons of the continuum from year to year, but suggested it is too much information to really drive decisions. She said it could be done in a third of the pages. Ms. O'Reilly said what is needed is a good conversation about the purpose of the report. The feedback received from agencies over the years has been that they like having the data available in order to do their work. Additionally, over the years people have asked to have things added to the report, and they have been accommodated. A smaller document is provided when going out to make presentations in the form of an executive summary. She allowed that going forward it would be a good idea to have a full discussion about who the audience is, what they still need, and how the document can be drafted to meet the

needs of all who use the document. There may also be in the future an interest in jurisdictions working together to produce the document.

7. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. O'Reilly reminded the Commissioners that from time to time the Commission cannot meet on Tuesday because the Council meets on that day following a Monday holiday. She said the Commission has traditionally moved its meetings to Thursday, but could also meet on Wednesday. In 2018 there are only four occasions when the Commission's meeting will be bumped to a day other than Tuesday, and for the Wednesdays of those weeks, room 1E-120 is available.

There was consensus in favor of moving the Commission's Tuesday meetings to Wednesday on weeks in which there is a Monday holiday.

With regard to receiving the Commission packets electronically rather than by hard copy, Ms. O'Reilly said there is no city requirement for hard copies and no prohibition that would prevent receiving the materials electronically. She said the packets will be delivered either electronically or in hard copy but not both.

There was consensus in favor of receiving the packets electronically.

Ms. O'Reilly reported that the Commission's new liaison to the police department, Major McCracken, had intended to attend the meeting but was at the last minute unable to do so. She said going forward he will be asked to bring speakers to the Commission to address topics such as human trafficking; the diversity affinity groups that serve in an advisory capacity to the police department; the ways in which the police department works with people experiencing homelessness; and how the police department works with the fire department.

Commissioner McEachran noted that the Bellevue Police Department has received the highest rating given to any police department and he said he would like to hear from Major McCracken what the department has done to achieve that recognition.

Commissioner Oxrieder said she would like to hear accounts of encounters with homeless persons as well as persons with mental health issues.

Christy Stangland followed up with the Commissioners on the tour of Hero House, which she noted was tentatively scheduled for December 7. She said the other available dates were November 28 and December 4. There was consensus to seek a date in January instead.

Christy Stangland said she has been in touch with the representative for the India Association of Western Washington (IAWW) about setting up a tour of their facility who said lunch on November 30 would be the best time. Three Commissioners indicated they could attend on that date.

Ms. O'Reilly said Lalita Uppala with the IAWW contacted her about sitting down to discuss how the agency has used the funding it received from the city. She said that could occur at a Commission meeting in January, or as an element of touring their facility.

The Commissioners were reminded of the annual Christmas party with the Parks and Community Services Board on December 5.

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

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner McEachran. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Perelman and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Kline adjourned the meeting at 8:03 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date