

The Human Services Commission approved these minutes on February 2, 2016

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

January 5, 2016
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

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

GUEST SPEAKERS: Sarah Pelosi, Child Care Resources; Bill Hallerman,
Angela Murray, Sophia Way

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 6:42 p.m.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. November 7, 2015

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

4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS - None

5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

A motion to open nominations for Commission Chair was made by Commissioner Kline. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Oxrieder and the motion carried unanimously.

A motion to nominate Jim McEachran to serve as Chair was made by Commissioner Kline.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Oxrieder.

No other nominations were made.

A motion to close nominations was made by Commissioner Kline. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Oxrieder and the motion carried unanimously.

The nomination of Jim McEachran to serve as Chair carried unanimously.

A motion to open nominations for Vice-Chair was made by Commissioner Kline. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Oxrieder and the motion carried unanimously.

A motion to nominate Carla Villar to serve as Vice-Chair was made by Commissioner Kline. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Oxrieder.

No other nominations were made.

A motion to close nominations was made by Commissioner Kline. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Oxrieder and the motion carried unanimously.

The nomination of Carla Villar to serve as Vice-Chair carried unanimously.

Chair McEachran said it was his privilege to serve with the Commission. He said the Commission's strength comes in the way it works collaboratively to meet the human services needs of the community in partnership with the remarkable staff.

6. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORT

Commissioner Bruels reported that he participated in the cultural competency training, which was excellent. The training is geared toward helping to keep cultural competence in mind and focusing thinking on diversity and equality.

Commissioner Bruels said he had also recently attended a training session offered by the Harborview Center for Sexual Assault and Traumatic Stress. One of their twice-monthly sessions is offered at Youth Eastside Services in Crossroads; the other is at Asian Counseling and Referral Service in Seattle. He said the session he attended was focused on sexual assault and the responsibilities of schools.

Commissioner Bruels said he also visited the Garden d'Lights at the Botanical Garden and had a very good time. He said it is great the city gives the community such a wonderful experience every year.

Commissioner Oxrieder said she also participated in the cultural competency training and found it very energizing and interesting. She said she also attended the meeting of the Eastside human service agencies where the focus was on targeted funding. The trend is toward having donors determine the agenda, which is both interesting and disappointing and which could

have implications for the Commission where there are groups whose funding has been cut off or significantly reduced based on the new trend.

Commissioner Kline noted that she also attended the cultural competency training and also attended the annual meeting of the Eastside Human Services Forum. She said she had the opportunity at the cultural competency training session to speak with a Councilmember about the issue of targeted funding. At the Eastside Human Services Forum meeting it was noted that United Way and other funders are moving away from certain target areas and focusing on other areas instead, often in order to comply with the wishes of their large donors. The areas that seem to be taking a particular hit are the disabled communities and the elderly.

Commissioner Kline said in December she also attended the annual holiday gathering for Provail in Seattle, an agency that serves the disabled community with workforce training and placement. The agency is in the process of opening an Eastside office in Redmond.

Commissioner Villar said she attended the cultural competency training as well and found value in the open and honest discussion. She said she also was impressed by the diversity of the Youth Link board, something which hopefully will be mirrored in other boards and commissions going forward.

Commissioner Villar said she also attended the Eastside Human Services Forum meeting where targeted funding was discussed. She said the representative from Redmond commented that the average grant they give to human services agencies is \$13,000; that is a very different reality from Bellevue which makes it difficult to compare apples to apples. The representative from AARP indicated that by 2030, twenty percent of the population in the state will be over the age of 65, which means it is not a good time to start cutting funding for seniors.

Commissioner Mercer said she had not been able to participate in the cultural competence training but did take an unconscious bias class.

Chair McEachran announced that David Johns Bowling will become the executive director of Congregations for the Homeless on February 1.

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly said she and Grant Coordinator Dee Dee Catalano met in December with representatives from We Are One America, an organization that provides advocacy around diversity and anti-racism. Their second language program offered in Yakima and Seattle is funded with money that will be going away, thus they wanted to know about Bellevue's application process. Their model is focused on using virtual gaming.

7. DISCUSSION

A. Reserve Fund Requests: Child Care Resources and The Sophia Way

Ms. Catalano explained that Child Care Resources will be losing some HUD funding, and The Sophia Way had requested additional funding to address a need to open a second shelter in Bellevue for women and children to meet a clear need.

Ms. Sarah Pelosi said the agency was notified in October about a substantial reduction in funding from HUD. She thanked the Commission for the ongoing commitment it has shown to the homeless childcare program. The program offers childcare subsidies and case management services to families experiencing homelessness in King County. The program is one of the few subsidy programs in the county that helps families before they are eligible for other subsidy programs, allowing families to do things like job and housing searches.

Child Care Resources has historically been funded by HUD. In October the local Continuum of Care made the difficult decision to eliminate support services from the 2016 application. The decision was based on changing priorities at the federal level and increasing competition for funds to support shelter and more housing-specific entities. Child Care Resources will experience a funding reduction of nearly \$500,000 effective February 1, an amount that equals half the agency's total budget for the program. The result will be less families served and the loss of some staff. Interestingly, the loss of HUD funding occurred almost simultaneously with the King County Executive's declaration of a state of emergency regarding homelessness.

Ms. Pelosi said the conversation around homeless families often includes school-aged children, but rarely does it include the birth-to-five children who do not have the same respite opportunity afforded by the children who go to school. Childcare is often the place for children in the latter category; it offers a safe place, a sense a community and belonging, and predictability. Childcare subsidies for homeless families make that possible. Typically, between 100 and 150 families are served in Bellevue annually and the funding received from the city supports about 30 percent of the overall need. The additional 70 percent of families are served through other funding sources, primarily HUD. The loss of HUD funding will jeopardize the agency's ability to serve families in Bellevue.

The requested reserve funds would allow the agency to make up for some of the missing funding and to continue providing services to needy families. It would also help staff the program in a way that would allow for the case management services that are so vitally important.

The Commissioners were told that 40 percent of the children who are living in shelters are under the age of four. They need some connection to their community and their parents need support in getting the resources they need to move forward in a positive direction.

Commissioner Perelman asked if a request for funding from Seattle has been made. Ms. Pelosi said the agency has been working with its partners across all of the cities since learning of the funding reduction. In conjunction with the Seattle/King County Coalition for Homelessness, an ask in the amount of \$300,000 was filed.

Noting that the request to Bellevue would pay for staffing, Commissioner Perelman asked if the staff would be needed if there were less funding for the childcare subsidies. Ms. Pelosi said funding from other sources is in place for the subsidies, including from the state. About \$300,000 of the funding reduction from HUD would have gone for subsidies, and the balance

would have gone for staffing. Staffing will be required to move the available subsidies out the door. If approved, the funds from Seattle would also be used for staffing as well.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Mercer, Ms. Pelosi said Child Care Resources has been very supportive of the homeless childcare program and there are contingency plans in place that will allow for some level of staffing until there is a better sense of how the funding picture will play out in the coming months. The board is willing to be flexible with some reserve funds, but by the end of the first quarter changes in staffing will be necessary unless additional funding is secured. State funding and suburban city grants for subsidies is secured through 2017. Funding from private foundations and other sources is also being sought.

Human Services Manager Emily Leslie noted that she serves on the Funders Alignment Group and reviews the funding recommendations for HUD applications. She said the decision made had nothing to do with Child Care Resources' programming. The HUD grant in question, which is the largest that comes into the region for homeless programs, has for many years been used for shelter and housing programs, but also for service programs that are not necessarily connected to housing. While the funding source has been stable over the years, HUD has been clear about how it wanted to see the funds used. The group has been trying to identify other funding sources for the service programs that have been using the HUD funds and has seen the list drop down to about five. Funding sources have been found for all of them except for Child Care Resources. If Seattle and King County continues to use the HUD funds for service programs, they will risk losing the money altogether.

Commissioner Bruels asked if there is a long-term plan in mind for how to deal with the shortfall in the years to come. Ms. Pelosi said Child Care Resources is aware of the need to secure long-term funding for the program. Strategic efforts are underway to achieve that goal. The request for emergency funds from Bellevue is seen as a stopgap to move through the coming year in a manner as fully formed as possible.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Bruels, Ms. Leslie allowed that the city does not have a formal emergency fund from which to draw for such requests. All human service contracts are paid from the Human Services Fund and in theory there is always a small amount of money that can be tapped to address emergencies or requests submitted off-cycle.

Commissioner Mercer asked what ramifications Child Care Resources will face if it does not get the requested \$15,000 from Bellevue. Ms. Pelosi said the likelihood is that fewer Bellevue families would be served.

Chair McEachran said he hoped Child Care Resources staff had the support of an aggressive board. Ms. Pelosi said the board members are fully supportive.

Ms. Angela Murray, Sophia Way executive director, thanked the Commission for the funding for the existing winter shelter. She noted, however, that beginning the Thanksgiving weekend when the weather turned cold an increased need for more shelter became clear. In December, 103 women phoned the agency requesting shelter, primarily for the 21-bed night shelter

program, which had only five spaces for the month. Those not able to get into the program asked for emergency shelter. The day center services, which are open from 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, had an average monthly attendance of 25 women per day during 2015 for a total of 386 unduplicated women and 84 children. On Christmas day the hours were extended and 31 women were served. As of January 6, the day center hours will be extended to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday for the remainder of the winter months.

Mr. Bill Hallerman with Catholic Community Services said the winter shelter was opened on October 15, a month earlier than the previous year. Both single women and families are served in the facility. The program was located in Redmond at the United Methodist church until December 30, after which the move was made to St. Peter's United Methodist Church in Crossroads. During October the average was about 23 folks per night. The average rose to 39 per night in November and close to 48 in December, not counting families put up in hotel rooms. A maximum of 50 can be served in the church locations and when that number was exceeded and calls to other facilities found them also full, there was no place to send families in need. Through a partnership with Lake Washington United Methodist Church, it was possible to patch together a short-term solution.

Mr. Hallerman said it is clear the need is overwhelming the current facility. That fact has led to asking what could be done with additional funding to double the capacity of the shelter. If a separate site can be found, families can be separated from single women, and each site could accommodate 50. The First Congregational Church allowed the use of its facility for January and February, but it will require funding from the cities to cover staffing costs.

Ms. O'Reilly said she sat down with staff from Redmond, Issaquah and Kirkland, along with Mr. Hallerman and Ms. Murray, after learning that women had been turned away from the shelter. Both short- and long-term solutions were discussed and the strategies highlighted. The cost of an additional shelter for three months would require a budget of roughly \$120,000. Given that King County and Seattle have declared a state of emergency regarding homelessness, the decision was made to request \$60,000 from King County and have each of the four Eastside cities kick in \$15,000. Redmond took the lead in developing a letter requesting the funds of the King County Executive. The letter was signed by the mayors of the four Eastside cities. Claudia Balducci, who at the time was mayor of Bellevue but who is now a King County Councilmember, contacted the deputy King County Council executive to inform her the letter was forthcoming. The letter was sent in mid-December and the response received was that King County would be putting out a request for proposals in early January. The anticipation is that King County will fund the request via an RFP.

Mr. Hallerman said he would be surprised if King County tosses in the full \$60,000, but said he was confident they will provide some level of funding. If approved, the \$15,000 each from the four Eastside cities could provide for a cash flow until such time as the county decides what to do. Currently the shelter costs are running close to \$25,000 per month, so having \$60,000 available from the cities would make it possible to open a shelter on January 15 and carry through the end of March. The site that is available is only available until March 1 so another location would need to be found after that.

Commissioner Kline asked if the potential exists for volunteers to staff the shelter rather than paid staff. Mr. Hallerman said while that could occur, the fact is the amount of pressure the volunteers would face is quite high. Ms. O'Reilly said the advantage of having trained personnel running the shelters is that they can provide case management and other services.

Chair McEachran asked if emergency funding from Bellevue will up the ante for more funding from others. Mr. Hallerman said he thought it would. If \$15,000 is given by each of the four Eastside cities, the second shelter will be good to go through the end of February.

Ms. Murray said part of the reason why the current situation being faced did not appear last year stems from the fact that even though the St. Peter's site was certified for 50, there were at times as many as 67 housed there. Additionally, the opening of Mary's Place in Seattle helped to relieve some of the pressure.

Commissioner Bruels commented that the problem is going to arise annually. If conventional wisdom holds, homelessness numbers will continue to swell. Continuing to address the problem as it has been addressed in the past will not be adequate.

Commissioner Mercer asked why effort was not put into planning for additional capacity before the need became clear. Mr. Hallerman said he has been working with the homeless for 21 years in Bellevue and has never seen so many homeless families. As rents continue to rise, the problem increases as well. Mary's Place has a capacity of 50 and is full; they are looking at opening additional capacity as well.

Ms. Murray said the focus is on responding to the need in a way that will involve having the funding in place before moving forward. January and February are the coldest months of the year, and having funds in hand to cover those months will mean a lot. No shelter will be kept open longer than there is funding to cover the expenses.

Commissioner Villar recalled that the report given to the Commission after the last winter season included the comment that having the women's shelter and the family shelter in the same place was a struggle. Because of being in the middle of a funding cycle, however, there was agreement it would be necessary to try and make it work for the current winter. She said it appeared that in spite of that commitment, things are at a point where separating the two makes sense and will be taken into account in any future funding requests. Ms. Murray said she spent Thanksgiving night at the shelter and saw many day center clients there. She said it is a difficult thing to mix the day center clients with families with young children. Separating the populations would be beneficial for all and would help create an atmosphere in which referrals to additional services could be made.

****BREAK****

Ms. Leslie suggested the present situation represents a good opportunity to test separating the two populations, at least for the rest of the winter. It would be appropriate for the agencies to then come back with proposals for having two shelters going forward. Looking ahead, homelessness will likely be one of the big issues in the next funding cycle. In the interim, the

fact that the mayors of Bellevue, Kirkland, Redmond and Issaquah are all supportive of contributing to address the clear need should be taken into account.

Ms. O'Reilly said the City Manager directed the budget director to find the money; the budget director asked the Parks Finance staff person to look for money in the Human Services budget.

Commissioner Mercer suggested that the Commission should in the next funding cycle plan to have some funds set aside to address issues that might arise in off years, rather than relying on having a fund balance from which to draw. That would make things fairer in the long run.

Commissioner Kline pointed out that the agencies involved with providing the winter shelter will not be receiving emergency funds by taking funds away from a competing agency. Additionally, the support of the mayors and city staff can be taken as a good indication that the Human Services Fund should be increased during the next cycle.

Commissioner Bruels noted that the winter shelter has largely been a Bellevue-led initiative. It appears now that there is general support from the other Eastside cities. There is clear political cover for the Commission making a recommendation to recommend approving the emergency funding, and for making the case for improved funding in the next cycle.

Ms. Leslie added that the solution identified for making it through the current winter will also provide some data on which to build an increased ask in the next cycle.

Commissioner Kline asked if trained staff, who can provide case management and the like, can be found on such short notice to work an additional shelter. Ms. O'Reilly said she had been told by Mr. Hallerman that between his on-call staff and Sophia Way there is a sufficient number of folks trained to work with at-risk populations to adequately staff the shelter.

For the record, Commissioner Kline reminded the Commission that her husband was a long-term member of the Child Care Resources board of directors. She noted that while he is no longer on the board, she would abstain from voting on that issue.

A motion to approve The Sophia Way request was made by Commissioner Mercer. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bruels and the motion carried unanimously.

A motion to approve the Child Care Resources request was made by Commissioner Bruels. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Oxrieder and the motion carried without dissent; Commissioner Kline abstained from voting.

8. DISCUSSION

A. English-As-A-Second Language

Intern Jaime Fajardo noted that one of the questions raised by the Commission in November centered on why the acronym used is ESL (English As A Second Language) rather than ELL

(English Language Learners). He explained that ELL is more of a local term that has grown out of the understanding that students needing to learn English may in fact know more than one language, while most federal funding sources continue to reference the ESL acronym. ESL instruction has traditionally taken the form of students in a classroom focused on English benchmarks, and ELL encompasses a more inclusive environment. The Bellevue School District utilizes a buddy support system in which students are teamed up to navigate the school structure together; that is one example of ELL.

Mr. Fajardo said the demand for English language instruction continues to rise. Currently there are some 18,000 Bellevue residents who speak a language other than English at home. In 2015, the city provided some \$260,000 in support of ESL classes, including general ESL, talk time groups, conversation groups, vocational ESL, and citizenship classes. ESL classes range from Level 1 to Level 7, which is an important issue relative to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) which requires a focus on outcomes in order to receive funding. Pursuing a degree and job placement are given priority over conversational ESL instruction.

Chair McEachran pointed out that while ESL classes in the past often focused on meeting the needs of those who were seeking to become employable, now there are persons coming from other countries who may in fact have higher education degrees already who are being urged to get into the educational process and get a degree. Many of them are saying what they really need is talk time and opportunities to improve their English skills.

Commissioner Villar said it would be helpful to break down the ESL class types list in the report to indicate which organizations in Bellevue provide them. Commissioner Mercer proposed also including which of the types of classes potentially could be funded under the WIOA.

Mr. Fajardo noted that the WIOA replaced the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and will be in effect for the next five years. That is significant because Bellevue College does not provide life skills courses. Local providers will be impacted in that they will likely seek to fill the gap.

There continues to be a need for ESL in Bellevue. Thirty-nine percent of Bellevue residents speak a language other than English at home, and there are 87 different languages spoken by students in the Bellevue School District. Additionally, diversity continues to increase in the city, and providers have reported increasing requests for adult ESL classes at all levels. One solution would be to create an ESL coalition to increase communication about making ESL resources visible and easier to access by those who need them.

Mr. Fajardo included in his written report a listing of ESL classes and programs offered in Bellevue, along with an indication of which programs are supported by the city. He stressed the need for the city's boards and commissions to reflect the diversity of Bellevue's population, including immigrant communities, communities of color, communities with lower incomes, and those with disabilities.

Ms. O'Reilly explained that the report will be retained as a resource for the Commission. She said it could also be shared with agencies and published on the website as well.

Commissioner Villar asked if We Are One America should be added to the list. Ms. O'Reilly said the group does not have anything on the Eastside yet, though they hope to.

Commissioner Oxrieder asked if there is any data regarding the demographics and first languages of those who are using the shelters. Ms. Leslie said that data is not yet in hand but will be when the agencies submit their quarterly reports.

9. DISCUSSION

A. Funding Gaps and Focus Areas for 2017-2018 Human Services Funding

Ms. O'Reilly called attention to a document outlining funding gaps by service area. She allowed that the document was still a work in progress. The document included known funding dollars lost for agencies funded by the city. It was stressed that no suggestion was being made that the city should backfill the lost dollars.

Commissioner Villar suggested that families for whom English is not their first language should be a target area. All low-income residents and those who did not attend college need a special focus because parents who did not themselves pursue an education beyond high school will not know how to navigate the system.

Ms. O'Reilly also shared with the Commissioners a document outlining the gaps identified in the current Needs Update. During the previous funding cycle, the applications were sorted based on the human services continuum and the Commission used the information to inform their decisions. The continuum is also used by the Department of Parks and Community Services in making programming decisions.

Mr. Fajardo said the mission was included on the worksheet identifying the gaps. While it will most likely not be possible to fund everything, an eye should be kept on the mission in making funding decisions.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Oxrieder, Ms. Leslie said there are two workshops already scheduled for agencies that might be interested in applying for funding. The first meeting will be for the northeast cities and will be at Redmond City Hall on March 2. The south county cities workshop will be in Tukwila on March 3. She said the next two Commission meetings will be primarily devoted to formulating the focus areas for the upcoming funding cycle.

10. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Leslie informed the Commissioners that the Needs Update was scheduled to be presented to the City Council on January 11. Chair McEachran will participate in the presentation along with staff. The Commissioners were urged to attend to provide moral support.

Chair McEachran said the holiday gathering with the Parks and Community Services Board was a wonderful experience.

11. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Leslie announced that the annual One Night Count is scheduled for the early morning hours of January 29. Former Commissioner Stephanie Beighle used to serve as one of the team captains in Bellevue. The captains go out ahead to identify areas where the count should be made. Persons to help conduct the count, including captains, are being sought. Ms. Leslie said she and Ms. O'Reilly will be participating.

Two Dr. Martin Luther King celebrations are planned, one on Friday, January 15, and the other on Saturday, January 16.

Chair McEachran commented that on December 14 the City Council engaged in a conversation regarding the affordable housing strategies workplan being pushed through. A Citizen Advisory Committee will be appointed to lead the process.

12. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS - None

13. ADJOURNMENT

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

Chair McEachran adjourned the meeting at 8:36 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date